Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 28 SEPTEMBER 1880

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 28 *September*, 1880.

Question.—Local Works Loan Bill—second reading.—Licensing Boards Bill—committee.—Local Government Bill—committee.—Gold Mining Appeals Bill—second reading.—Pacific Islands Labourers Bill—committee.

The SPEAKER took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

QUESTION.

Mr. BAILEY asked the Colonial Secretary—

Will the Government take steps to rescind the Wheel Tax By-law of the Tiaro and other Divisional Boards, as has been done with the similar By-law of the Walloon Divisional Board?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. Palmer) replied—

As no By-law such as that passed by the Walloon Divisional Board has been passed in any other division, action on the part of the Government is not considered necessary.

LOCAL WORKS LOAN BILL—SECOND READING.

The PREMIER (Mr. McIlwraith), in moving the second reading of this Bill, said the position of the Government with reference to the loans advanced to local bodies from time to time was at present in a very unsatisfactory state. Those loans had been at various times advanced under different conditions, both as to payment of interest and repayment of principal, and as to the times when both were payable. Under the Municipalities Act of 1864 the first series of loans was advanced. Under that Act provision was made at a uniform rate of 6 per cent. for interest, and of 5 per cent. for repayment of principal. These loans hon. members would find set forth in schedule No. 1, at the back of the Bill. In that schedule was given all the amounts that had been lent at different times to the municipalities of the colony. In addition to providing for the interest of 6 per cent., and the repayment of the loan at 5 per cent. per annum, it was usual, when these loans were given, to ask for—and it was generally given—a mortgage over the local rates. The next class of loans was advanced under the Local Government Act of 1878. Hon. members would remember that when that Act was passed no provision whatever was made for the repayment of loans; but provision was made for payment of interest at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum; and, so far as those loans were concerned, none of the money had been repaid. As to the loans advanced under the Act of 1864, he believed that not only had the whole of the interest been paid, but the prescribed amount of redemption of the debt also. There was another class of loans the majority of which had not been made under any particular Act—namely, loans to local bodies for purposes of water supply. The principal loan of that class was that advanced to the Municipality of Brisbane, to which there had been lent by the Government, under the Brisbane Waterworks Act of 1863, the sum of £95,000. That Act made no provision for the payment of interest, and until the date of the last two loans of £25,000 and £5,000 respectively no interest had been paid. Thus out of a total amount advanced of £95,000, £65,000 had never borne any interest, and £30,000 bore interest at the rate 5 per cent. per annum, according to the foot-note of the Estimates on which the money was granted. The Rockhampton Municipality had borrowed for its waterworks the sum of £25,000. That was borrowed in exactly the same way as the amount advanced for the Brisbane Waterworks. Interest had been paid on that amount from the day on which it was borrowed at the rate of 5 per cent., but no provision had been made for repayment of principal. He then came to a class of loans which were giving more trouble than any of the others—namely, loans sanctioned by the House in the Loan Estimates. The only instructions that the Government got from those Estimates wer thee item itself, designated as a loan for a certain locality for a certain purpose, with a foot-note saying that the loan would bear interest at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum. Amongst those were loans for waterworks to the Ipswich, Maryborough, Toowoomba, Warwick, Gladstone, and Charters Towers Municipalities. A large amount of that money had been spent by the Government, and difficulties had arisen between the municipalities and the Government as to their responsibility to take over the works and pay the interest. Some difficulty arose with the Ipswich Municipality, but that had been got over, the municipality not only having taken over the works but acknowledged their obligation to pay the interest, which had been paid accordingly. Some difficulty, also, there was with regard to taking over the amount that Toowoomba stood responsible for, and hon. members would remember that the question was before the House some time ago. He believed that the responsibility of local bodies to pay the interest and principal had been acknowledged by all the municipalities at the present time, with the exception of Maryborough and Warwick. The last class of loans were those which had been granted lately to municipalities for water supply, such as Townsville and Cooktown; and in those cases the Government had brought the loan under the provisions of the Local Government Act of 1878. In those cases, in making the municipalities responsible for the money, the Government entrusted them with the expenditure of it, so as to avoid the difficulties which Government had experienced after the works were made of local bodies becoming responsible for the interest and principal. Hon. members would see that under

the various Acts the conditions under which money had been borrowed varied very considerably. At the present time the old municipalities were paying at the rate of 6 per cent. per annum for interest, and 5 per cent. redemption money; but under the later Acts loans had been granted without any condition of repayment whatever, and at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum interest. The object of this Bill was to bring all the existing loans under the same conditions, and to provide similar conditions for the redemption of the principal. It was intended by the Government to place the works of local bodies in six classes, as provided for in sections 6 and 7 of the Bill, in accordance with their durability or reproductive character. The whole of the existing loans to municipalities and local bodies would be treated as being of the first class, the term of redemption being forty years. Having premised that existing loans were in the first class, he would now explain how it was proposed to deal, not only with the old loans, but also with future loans. Clause 6 provided that—

"For the purposes of this Act, public works to be hereafter undertaken by local authorities shall be deemed to be of six classes, that is to say—

"(1.) Waterworks, wharves, jetties, and other permanent and reproductive undertakings, if constructed of stone, brick, concrete, or iron, or a combination of the whole or any of these materials.

"(2.) Permanent works for drainage and other sanitary purposes, if constructed of stone, brick, concrete, or iron, or a combination of the whole or any of these materials.

"(3.) Tramways, bridges, culverts, fords, and crossings, if constructed of stone, brick, concrete, or iron, or a combination of the whole or any of these materials.

"(4.) Buildings constructed of stone, brick, concrete, or iron, or of a combination of the whole or any of these materials.

"(5.) Roads properly cleared, drained, graded, and formed not less than half-a-chain wide at formation level, and satisfactorily pitched and metalled with hard stone, the latter at least six inches thick to a width of not less than sixteen feet; and bridges, wharves, jetties, culverts, fords, and buildings substantially constructed of hardwood timber.

"(6.) Roads newly cleared, drained, graded, and formed, but not metalled, and all 'log' or 'plank' roads, and other works of a temporary character."

According to the class in which works were placed would be the time allowed by the Government for the repayment of the loan. For works of the first class the period would be forty years, for works of the second class thirty years, of the third class twenty-one years, of the fourth class fourteen years, of the fifth class ten years, and of the sixth class five years. The basis on which the redemption of principal and interest was calculated was that they should pay 5 per cent. for the money to be borrowed. Hon. members would understand by looking at schedule No. 2 the principle on which that arrangement had been arrived at. Money borrowed was to be treated as a terminable annuity payable in a certain number of years, and according to the class to which the works might belong. If, for instance, the works were of the first class, under which forty years were allowed to repay the principal and interest, that would be at the rate of £5 16s. 8d. per cent. per annum. That would be £5 per cent. per annum to the Government as interest, and 16s. 8d. per cent. to pay off the principal in a period of forty years, at the end of which time all payments would cease. Works in the second class would pay £7 16s. 6d. per cent. per annum; that was 5 per cent. for interest and £2 16s. 6d. per cent. per annum to pay off the principal in thirty years. To all the municipalities which had borrowed money under the Act of 1864 this Bill would give much easier terms than they were enjoying at the present time. Instead of having to pay 6 per cent. interest and 5 per cent. redemption money they would only be called upon to pay £5 16s. 8d. per cent., and in the course of forty years the debt would be wiped out altogether. Having explained the principle of the Bill, he would now refer to a few of the clauses, which would further explain how the measure would operate when it came into force. Clause 2 provided that—

"Whenever in any Municipal Act the word 'interest' is used in respect of any loan advanced under the provisions thereof, such word shall be taken to mean and include the half-yearly sums required by this Act to be paid according to the second schedule hereto as interest upon and in liquidation of such loan."

The reason for that clause was that the Local Government Act, for instance, gave the Government certain powers to indemnify themselves on the non-payment of interest by the borrowing body if the interest was not paid, but no power was given to recover the principal. By this clause they would be enabled to have the same power to recover from the municipal body any portion of the principal allowed by the Act as of interest itself. The tables in schedule 2 had been carefully calculated, and would no doubt be found to be correct. Clause 8 provided that the annuities were to be paid in instalments, half-yearly, according to the schedule. There was a proviso to that clause that under certain conditions the Governor in Council might have power to postpone for a time not exceeding five years the date on which the commencement of the repayment of the principal began—that was to say, that if a loan was to be repaid, including principal and interest, in twenty-one years, which would be at the rate of £7 16s. 6d. per cent. per annum, the Governor in Council had power to postpone the commencement of paying off the redemption money for the first five years, the interest at the rate of 5 per cent. being paid from the first. After that period the payment of principal would commence. Clause 9 provided for the way in which the Treasurer was to deal with the portion of the loan repaid. Take, for instance, a municipality, paying at the rate of £5 16s. 8d. per cent. on a loan in the first class of forty years' duration; £5 of that amount was interest, and 16s. 8d. principal. It was proposed that the interest should go into the Consolidated Revenue, and the principal to the credit of the loan fund to be utilised again in amounts required by other municipalities or in redeeming the Government debt. Clause 10 provided that a half-yearly loan statement should be published by the Treasurer; clause 12 provided that if arrears were unpaid the Treasurer could enforce payment; and clause 13 was somewhat to the same effect. Having now explained the principles of the Bill, he thought hon. members would admit that it was actually necessary at the present time. He could see very little reason why the old municipalities should pay more than others for their loans which had been borrowed more recently, and he could see just as little reason why the Government should continue to lend money to local bodies without any provision being made for its repayment. He moved that the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. DICKSON said that a similar scheme to that embodied in the Bill was attempted to be put in operation by the Treasury prior to the Local Government Act coming into force, but it was objected to, principally by members of the Corporation of Brisbane, who contended that their indebtedness was well secured and that there was no necessity for them to establish a sinking fund. They considered that they

should be placed in the same position as the Government, who were not called upon to make any such provision for the paying off of loans. It was very undesirable that young municipalities which were called upon to undertake the construction of costly works, and the revenues of which were by no means elastic, should be called upon to increase their difficulties by having to make periodical withdrawals from their ordinary revenue to provide a sinking fund for the ultimate liquidation of their debt. They would undoubtedly find that it would be an inconvenient strain to bear. In the schedule of the Bill he noticed that the Brisbane Board of Waterworks was to be saddled with annual interest and a sinking fund to discharge a debt of £95,000. He should like to see that matter settled, and he must congratulate the Premier on endeavouring, even in a crude manner, to bring that hitherto open question on to some settled basis. At the same time, it was a serious question to consider whether the board could sustain such a charge as interest on £95,000. It had been understood that the board had originally obtained a loan of £65,000, but through some defect in the Act they had never been liable to interest on it, and he did not think that the revenue of the board was now sufficient to enable them to make provision for it. There was no dispute as to the loan of £30,000. Assuming that the board were able to pay 5 per cent. interest on £95,000, he did not think it at all necessary that they should have to provide a sinking fund also which would liquidate the debt in forty years. Where the works were of such magnitude as those under the conduct of the board were, the securities must increase. The value of the works must increase and not suffer deterioration, which circumstance, if it were likely to occur, would alone justify the establishment of a sinking fund. He was inclined to think that the Bill would not be regarded with favour by the municipalities. They had sufficient to do at present to provide for the regular payment of interest to the Treasury. This interest was always secured to the Government, as in the event of the municipalities not paying it could be deducted from the endowments. The municipalities ought certainly to be allowed time to get a larger revenue, and to extend permanent works of a reproductive character before being called upon to provide such sinking funds as were proposed. In New Zealand and in Victoria several municipal bodies had obtained loans on their own responsibilities, or on a guarantee from the Government. Whilst he approved of the principle of the Government being the creditor of the municipalities, he did not think that the Government should place the municipalities in a worse position than they would be in if they were dealing directly with any other public creditor. The latter would not insist on any periodical reduction by the municipality by a sinking fund, and why should the Government do so? Theoretically, the principle of the Bill might be right, but he thought it would be wise to be as liberal as possible to the municipal authorities. So long as the security which those bodies offered was good—so long as there was the security of deducting interest from the endowments—the Government ought to be content to charge only the annual interest, and not call on them to provide sinking funds which must necessarily absorb revenue which would otherwise be employed in the maintenance or construction of works of public utility. He was sure that that view of the Bill would be taken by a large number of the municipalities. That would be the chief objection to the Bill. Reverting to the Board of Waterworks, whilst acknowledging that it was desirable that the ambiguity which surrounded the board concerning the payment of interest on loans should be removed, he thought it equally undesirable to hamper the board with any charge which their revenue would not enable them to pay. If the Bill passed into law the board might possibly surrender their functions, in which case the works would revert to the Government. That aspect of the case might not be considered an unsatisfactory one, but it was almost certain that there would be great dissatisfaction supposing the rates for water were doubled—which he believed would have to be done if the board were compelled to provide interest and a sinking fund for the large amount of £95,000. The works of the board were of an extensive and imperishable character; they would increase in value, and would be a good asset for many years to come; therefore, there was no reason why the indebtedness on them should be now attempted to be liquidated by means of a sinking fund.

Mr. FEEZ said he was somewhat surprised at the arguments advanced by the hon. member who had just resumed his seat. It was just the same as they had seen ever since this had been a colony—that a great body in a centralised part of the country, after being assisted to carry out important works, turned round and repudiated the obligations to which they had bound themselves. The municipalities had borrowed money from the Government on certain conditions, and he did not think the Municipality of Brisbane was exempt from them. In Brisbane there was a population of from 27,000 to 30,000, and their indebtedness on waterworks was £95,000. In Rockhampton there was a population of between 8,000 and 9,000, and they had spent £25,000 on water supply. He would appeal to the Ministers now in power and Ministers who had been in power as to whether the Municipality of Rockhampton had ever repudiated the payment of the interest? They had not only paid the interest, but had made provision for the payment of the principal at the proper time. They knew what their obligations were, and they had imposed such rates as would meet them. If all the corporations were to go in for repudiation it would be a very serious matter indeed, as he noticed by the schedule to the Bill that their indebtedness to the Government amounted to £407,491. He believed that the Bill would be very well received; he knew it would be so received by the outside municipalities. If municipalities with small populations were willing and able to meet their obligations, he did not see why there should be any difficulty in a thickly-populated place like Brisbane doing so. From his many years' experience in municipal matters, he could speak with some degree of authority on the subject, and he must say that he believed the Bill would be found to be a very beneficial measure. It certainly should have his most cordial support.

The HON. J. M. THOMPSON said it appeared to him that the arrangement proposed by the Bill was a manifestly advantageous one to all parties interested, except the Brisbane Board of Waterworks. If the Bill would have the effect of settling the vexed question relating to that board, a very good thing would be done. It seemed to him to be a reasonable way to get out of debt by putting by periodical amounts—a small addition to interest. He did not think there ought to be any objection to the principle of the Bill. In regard to the machinery of it he did not see how it would work. The second clause said that the word "interest," where it occurred in local government Acts with regard to loans, should mean the amount of interest and principal added together. On looking at the Local Government Act he found that a special rate was to be levied when a loan was raised to pay the interest, so

that that provision of the Act had in some cases done its work already. There would have to be an additional rate to raise the additional amount over 5 per cent. required for the sinking fund, and how was that to be provided for? He merely mentioned that to show that they could not make a short cut when attempting to effect a complex operation. The point was one of detail, which could be dealt with in committee. If he understood the Bill better he might deal with it in committee; but he thought it well to mention some minor matters now, so that the Premier could take the points into consideration and introduce amendments if they were necessary. It would never do for all of them to try to amend the Bill, which was founded on a certain principle and on certain calculations. He noticed that subsection C of the 75th clause of the Divisional Boards Act provided that loans should not exceed a certain amount calculated by interest on the loans as compared with the rates. With regard to the vexed question of the Board of Waterworks, it was nothing at all to say that the other parts of the colony got this advantage if it could not get the same;—at any rate, let all be treated alike. If this Bill was to settle the question, it ought to have the support of all parties. The principle of the Bill was so simple that there was very little to say about it. The only question was, could they by that Bill bring the Brisbane Waterworks in so as to pay interest, and could they without their consent bring in other municipalities who had borrowed money believing they would have to pay only 5 per cent. Some arrangement would have to be made to pay the small additional rate which he might call redemption-money.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he thoroughly agreed with the principle of the Bill, and believed that all the municipalities would thank the Ministry for bringing it in. On behalf of the Municipality of Ipswich, he could say that it would be very well satisfied with the principle. They paid 6 per cent. for a part of their present loan at Ipswich; but under this Act they would be able not only to pay their interest, but, in the course of forty years, to pay their principal. That would be a very good thing indeed. For these reasons he would be very glad to give his support to the Bill. He scarcely saw, however, how these 16s. 8d. additional with the 5 per cent. were to take off the principal in forty years; but no doubt it could be done very well, because the principal was being reduced every year. They would be able to see how this was to be done more clearly when the Bill got into committee. Meanwhile, he thought it his duty to say that all the municipalities would be very favourably disposed towards it.

The HON. S. W. GRIFFITH said that he supposed there was no doubt that Parliament had the power to alter the terms of a bargain which the country had made with the municipalities. Alterations of bargains were not things to be done as a matter of course, and good reason should be shown why one bargain should be substituted for another. If the municipalities found, as the member for Ipswich said, that it would be to their advantage to pay the amount prescribed in the schedule, and that they would be able thereby to pay off both interest and principal, it would no doubt be a very good thing; but suppose it was not to their advantage, and that it would be absolutely ruinous, then the question arose whether the Parliament had any business to make a change which would be so much for the worse. Take the case of waterworks. The construction of waterworks was not simply a matter of bookkeeping, for the work was undertaken not only as a matter of advancing a loan, but of public health, and the welfare of the people. It was therefore something more than an affair of pounds, shillings, and pence. Let them pay by all means their 7 per cent. interest or any other sum that was fixed; but suppose it was impossible for them to do that and at the same time to supply the water, the public health would seriously suffer. He did not know whether it would come to that alternative; he only wished to point out that it was not a mere matter of book-keeping, as some seemed to think. When they (the Opposition) were sitting on that side of the House they used to be told by certain hon. members, who professed a burning regard for the interests of Brisbane, that the water supply and the drainage were bad, and that it was necessary to take some immediate measures for the preservation of the health of the people. The hon. members who protested then would now have an opportunity of showing their anxiety for the protection of the metropolis. Only last year the Government in the speech of His Excellency introduced this subject, and said they would have to take some steps to get a better water supply. The only step taken, however, by the Government up to the present time was this Bill, by which they proposed that the Board of Waterworks should pay £4,000 a-year more than at present, without getting anything for it. That seemed a strange way to remedy an admitted grievance. He did not know much about the operation of the Board of Waterworks, but he believed they were gradually extending the supply to the suburbs, as far as their means would allow.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Mr. Perkins): Yes; and they charge for it too.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he had no doubt they charged for it pretty highly; but if this Bill passed, and the Board had to pay £4,000 a-year more, of course by so much would their powers of extending their works be diminished. The amount expended last year on extensions was about £3,000. If this Bill passed it would absorb all that amount, and £1,000 in addition, so that it was quite certain that unless other arrangements were come to there would be no possibility of the Board extending their operations. The view he took was, not that the people of Brisbane should not pay as much as anyone else, but that this was a matter of health rather than of pounds, shillings, and pence. If the proposed change were made the rates would have to be very largely increased, and he doubted whether it was desirable that the Board of Waterworks should be crippled at the present time. He had no doubt that the works should be self-supporting, and that in time they would be so; but whether this was the right time to make such a change as was contemplated was a matter for serious consideration. The circumstances under which this loan was advanced were rather singular. The £65,000 was advanced under the Act passed in 1863, which contained no definite provision with respect to the payment of interest; and from that time until now it had been a disputed point between the Government and the Board of Waterworks whether the latter were liable for interest on that sum or not;—at all events, up to the present time none had been paid. The Government had generally protested that interest ought to be paid, but the board had been victorious and never had paid any. At one time there appeared to have been a tacit understanding that the liability should be set against the supply of water to Government buildings and offices in town. He was not familiar with the operations of the board, but he believed they were committed to a very large extension of their works. Another reser-

voir would be required soon, and it would be necessary to extend the mains to some of the suburbs, including Toowong—which, although close to the supply, got no water at present. Therefore this seemed to be a very inopportune time to impose suddenly additional burdens to such an extent. If any injury of that kind were inflicted the only result would be that the Bill would be inoperative. That consideration led him to another part of the Bill—he did not see how the provisions of the Act were to be enforced except by stoppage of endowment. That was the means provided by the Local Government Act, and the 12th section of the Bill said that the Treasurer, in such case, might exercise the powers provided by the Municipal Act for the recovery of overdue moneys. But the waterworks did not get any endowment, and therefore that power could not be exercised. It would be the same thing as trying to exercise the power over a municipality which did not get any endowment;—it was impossible to get blood from a stone. This was a practical matter, which would work very well so long as both parties agree about it; but if they did not he did not see how it could be enforced. Suppose the board were unable to pay the increased sum—£5,540 per annum—what would the Government do? The only thing they could do would be to take the reservoir; but then they would have to place it in the hands of someone to work it for them, or else make the waterworks a department of the Government. It was hard to see how the Bill could come into operation, unless the provisions were mutually beneficial to the two parties concerned. Another question arose—what was to be done with the money, when repaid? The money was borrowed from the Government out of loan, and when repaid was it to be placed to a trust fund or become a service for further loans? Under the Local Government Act a loan was not repayable, but he was not sure how it was under the Act of 1864. It was quite certain that the money should not go into revenue, and placing it to a trust fund was a mere matter of bookkeeping. These matters showed that the Bill required serious consideration in order that it might be of any practical effect. It could only come into operation with the mutual assent and goodwill of both parties to the transaction. He should not oppose the second reading, but he hoped the Bill would receive serious consideration before it went into committee.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Mr. Macrossan) said the hon. member for North Brisbane had not criticised the Bill very severely, but what remarks he had made had been entirely in the interest of the city of Brisbane. The interests of the city of Brisbane were certainly very great, but they were much less than the interests of the colony; and he did not think the position taken up by the hon. member was one which the leader of the Opposition should occupy. The hon. gentleman also said that this was an innovation upon the bargains already made with municipalities, although he did not dispute the power of the Government to make alterations of that kind. The hon. member (Mr. Macfarlane) had indicated how the Bill was likely to be received by the municipalities throughout the country, almost all of which he (Mr. Macrossan) believed had contracted debts under the Act of 1864. Under that Act they had to pay 6 per cent. interest, and besides that they were supposed to pay 5 per cent. for redemption of the principal; whilst under this Bill they were only required to pay a total amount of £5 16s. 8d. There was very little doubt that the assent of the municipalities would be cheerfully given. The people of Brisbane had been enjoying for a great number of years the use of £60,000 of money belonging to the colony, and they had persistently refused to pay any interest upon it. Now, the hon. gentleman (Mr. Griffith) regarded it as a great hardship that the people should be asked at the end of a term of years to consider the question of payment of interest; although they were asked to pay a smaller sum than they had to pay originally, and part of that sum went towards redeeming the principal. The change could not possibly cripple the resources of the Board of Waterworks, and re-act upon the whole of the city of Brisbane, as the hon. gentleman had suggested. All hon. members liked to see the people of Brisbane extremely healthy and enjoying a good water supply, but he did not see why they should enjoy those advantages at the expense of the whole colony. Brisbane was rich enough to pay fairly for its own health and its own water supply. So far from crippling the Board of Waterworks, the change would tend to do exactly the reverse. The board would not be deterred from laying down a single pipe or supplying a single gallon of water; all they would have to do would be to acknowledge their just debts and pay the interest upon those debts. Instead of using the rates received by them for water supplied to the people of Brisbane, in the extension of mains to every town and suburb, they would be asked to pay the interest upon their first debt, and come to the Government and borrow more money. They would then be placed in the same position as every other municipality in the colony, and as every honest man in the colony who desired to pay his just debts. The hon. gentleman talked about the water being very dear, but in his opinion the water was supplied to the people of Brisbane very cheap. If the hon. gentleman had been in places where the water was bought by the caskful—as it had been in nearly every municipality before money was borrowed for waterworks, and as it was in the outskirts of Brisbane only lately—the hon. gentleman would know that the water supplied in Brisbane was nearly ten times as cheap as it could be bought by the caskful. When people had enjoyed such privileges for a number of years they should not refuse to pay interest upon the outlay by means of which those benefits were secured. He was quite certain that the Bill would meet the approval of the colony at large, and he had no doubt it would also meet the approval of the people of Brisbane themselves, because, by simply paying interest on their debt, the board would be able to carry out their extensions more largely than they were able to at the present time. He could hardly understand how the board had been allowed to go on so long without paying; he considered the several Governments that had held office had been guilty of dereliction of duty in allowing it. As soon as the board refused to pay interest they should have been superseded and another board appointed, until the Government found a board of honest men who would not consider it inconvenient to pay what they owed. No doubt many people found it inconvenient to pay what they owed, but no honest man refused to pay when he had the means; and he maintained that the people of Brisbane were the most well-to-do of any in the colony. In 1877 the hon. member (Mr. Dickson), then Colonial Treasurer, called upon the Board of Waterworks to pay the interest due by them, then amounting to £37,000; and he believed the hon. gentleman was not only unsuccessful in getting any part of it, but he actually paid the board for water supplied to Government offices. He had not the slightest doubt but that the Bill would pass through committee very easily. He was quite as certain that the people of the colony generally would approve of the principles of the

measure. It could not fail to work well and in the interests of the people, and no people would think more of it ultimately than the people of Brisbane.

Mr. WELD-BLUNDELL said he desired to point out one matter in connection with the Bill which would serve to show the necessity for the introduction of some measure of the kind. They had in these colonies innumerable instances of towns springing up, and in the course of a few years being almost deserted through failure in trade, in consequence of their mineral resources being worked out, or from some cause of that kind. Take the case of a town now in a prosperous condition borrowing £5,000 or £6,000, there being no sinking fund to provide for repayment. In the course of ten or fifteen years the population of that same town might be reduced to such an extent that it would be impossible to pay even the interest on the original loan. It was in such cases as this that the provision of a sinking fund would be found so advantageous. Ballarat was an instance of a city which had been in an exceedingly wealthy and prosperous condition. Very few would say that Ballarat did not show signs of decadence at the present time.

Mr. WALSH: It is in a flourishing condition now.

Mr. WELD-BLUNDELL said the place looked like a city of the dead. The population at the present time was nothing like the population when the goldfields were being worked. Roma was in a very prosperous condition at the present time, and was very likely to apply for money; but if the railway were extended elsewhere, the town would sink into the position of an ordinary country township.

Mr. WALSH said the arguments of the hon. member for Clermont were absurd. He defied the hon. member or anyone else to point to a case of a prosperous Australian town which had been altogether abandoned.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Cooktown.

Mr. WALSH said Cooktown had undoubtedly seen very prosperous times, and was now suffering from a reaction; but did anyone doubt but that the town would recover its former position? Within the next forty years Cooktown would occupy ten times the position it occupied at the present time. Did the hon. member mean seriously to say that when the railway was taken beyond Roma that town would die a natural death? The idea was absurd. There was a large area of valuable land in the neighbourhood, which would in course of time be settled. Every town in the colony, quite independently of the mining interest, was visited with depression from time to time. Trade fluctuated: they suffered about every five years from some disturbing visitation, brought about by circumstances over which no one seemed to have any control. The hon. member mentioned Ballarat to illustrate his argument; but he could assure him that Ballarat was one of the most prosperous towns in the Australian colonies. Ballarat did not depend upon mining alone: a large population was settled around it. The Bill was introduced very opportunely, and could not fail to have a good effect if it tended to check the borrowing propensities of municipalities. There was no question but that municipalities were inclined to borrow, and to leave it to their successors to devise the means of paying the debt. For this reason, provision for the simultaneous payment of principal and interest was a very desirable step. It would also make the municipal authorities a little more cautious in the expenditure of their money. It had frequently come to his own knowledge that moneys borrowed from the Government were spent foolishly and recklessly. He would be prepared, if a good case were shown, to extend some consideration to the metropolis. The Government, for instance, might be acting wisely if, having regard for the preservation of the health of a large portion of the community, they made an exception in the case of the Waterworks authorities. He was inclined to support the Bill.

Mr. BEATTIE did not object to the Bill, but he had a decided objection to some of the remarks of the Minister for Works with reference to municipalities. The hon. gentleman referred to the Municipality of Brisbane; but he knew very well that that municipality had nothing whatever to do with the waterworks money. An Act was passed in 1863 by the Government of the day, who decided that waterworks ought to be constructed for the metropolis. The matter was supervised, and the pipes were brought to the outskirts of the city. After spending £60,000 to accomplish that portion of the work, it was necessary to borrow another amount to bring the pipes within the city. The Municipality was never consulted with reference to the taking of the water within the city; and no member of the Municipal Council was upon the board. It was not right, therefore, to condemn the Municipality in the matter. They were told that the people of Brisbane had had the benefit of the waterworks for a great number of years. One would imagine, from the way in which the statement was made, that they had enjoyed the benefit free of charge. The waterworks were a great benefit, but people paid for the benefit. Did the people of New South Wales complain of the large expenditure necessary to take a water supply into Sydney? He believed the scheme whereby the supply of Sydney was to be accomplished would cost nearly a million; but they did not find the people of the inland towns complaining. He spoke from experience when he said that the cost of water in Sydney was 5s. per room, and that in Brisbane people had to pay 21s. Surely they paid enough for their fiddle! The hon. member for Blackall asked why the interest was not paid; but, as a matter of fact, the Act made no provision for it, and when a Government applied to the board for the money that fact was pointed out. The succeeding Government took good care, however—and very properly so—that all other moneys lent to the board should be under a guarantee for the payment of interest. He quite agreed with the Minister for Works that it was not desirable to tax rates for purposes of extension: it was much better to borrow money for that purpose. He would point out, however, that if the Government insisted upon the payment of the money already claimed from the Waterworks Board, the energy of the board would be completely destroyed. He did not see how the board could pay the money, seeing that £5,500 would have to be forthcoming out of a revenue of £9,000. He did not desire to speak for Brisbane in preference to any other town in the colony. He believed that every other town was entitled to similar advantages; but, as a rule, he believed a little more in the shape of advantages was conceded to the metropolis than to ordinary provincial towns. If, however, the Waterworks Board had not paid interest, he believed they had supplied water to the Government establishments free of charge.

The PREMIER: They ought to pay for the water.

Mr. BEATTIE believed the establishments did pay for it at the present time. He believed the board set down £1,100 as rates chargeable to

the Government. When the Colonial Secretary was in office at a former time, the hon. gentleman was, he believed, under the impression that he could not charge the board interest, seeing that the Act did not provide for it. If, however, a distinct arrangement had been made, and the board had refused to pay the money, he believed the Government would have been justified in adopting the principle of the Minister for Works.

The HON. G. THORN did not rise to oppose the Bill, but to offer a few remarks upon it; and first of all he would say that, to his mind, the Bill did not go far enough. They should give fairplay to the municipalities and towns, and not make fish of them and flesh of the country; in fact, the Bill was a stab at the towns for the benefit of the country. Towns and suburbs of towns were already very heavily handicapped under the Divisional Boards Act; they were assessed at their annual value, whereas in the outside districts, in the case of pastoral lessees, they were assessed on the annual rental, which they all knew was a mere infinitesimal part of the value. When he was in office, between four and five years, he gave a large sum of money to the outside districts for water supply, perhaps £100,000, and he saw nothing whatever in the Bill about that money. He thought the districts that received that money should be called upon to pay interest on it, which they were much better able to do than the towns which were very heavily taxed in the way he had pointed out. It was possible for a man holding 500 square miles in the outside districts not to pay more than a man with a small allotment in town; and he knew that there were cases where a man with country on which there were 100,000 sheep paid only £5 a-year, while small holders in towns and in the country paid twice that amount. The country should be made to pay far more than it did at the present time under the Divisional Boards Act. When the Bill was in committee he should ask for a return of all the money that he and other Ministers had given to country districts for water supply, in order that the country should be called upon to pay interest as well as towns. The Minister for Works had insinuated that the city of Brisbane had repudiated its obligation with regard to water supply; but it had done nothing of the sort. The Act never said they should pay interest on the money borrowed for waterworks, and it was never intended that interest should be paid, no more than for the money handed over to the outside districts for water supply. If the city of Brisbane was called upon to pay interest, certainly the outside districts should do the same. It appeared that there was to be a lot of money let loose under this Bill, which might be a powerful evil in the hands of an unscrupulous Ministry. It would go a long way to square electorates. He would not oppose the Bill, but thought there was no very great necessity for it.

Mr. AMHURST always listened with great amusement to the hon. member who had just spoken, who had made a very feeble attack on the outside districts because they were not to be taxed under this Bill; but if he (Mr. Thorn) looked at the interpretation clause he would find that "Local authority" meant

> "Any municipal council, divisional board, or water commission, constituted under the laws in force for the time being for the constitution of municipalities, divisions, or water areas."

Therefore, under these three heads the whole colony was included. He had no doubt the hon. member was in the House at the time the £60,000 was given to the Brisbane Municipality for water supply, for the simple reason that no one was more able to manipulate political tactics or to give sops. Some hon. members said he (Mr. Thorn) was not in the House at that time, and the records bore that out, but certainly if he was not there in the flesh he was there in spirit. It seemed just the sort of tiddle-winking the hon. member would do, and he (Mr. Amhurst) did not see why the colony should suffer from this tiddle-winking and pulling of the wires. If the hon. member paid attention to the Bill he would find it was a very good one. How it was that Brisbane had not paid interest for so many years was not very clear, and he could see no hardship in the citizens being called upon to do so now. They were not asked for any arrears, but only to be placed on the same footing as the rest of the colony, and having had the advantage of the money for so many years they could not object. If they had been supplying the Government departments with water without the rates being paid, the Government had been amply paid the interest; and he thought the Government should be treated like any ordinary consumer of water.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that the committal of the Bill stand on Order of the Day for to-morrow.

Mr. THORN hoped the hon. gentleman would cause to be laid on the table a return of all the amounts paid or handed over to outside districts for water supply, before they went into committee on the Bill.

The PREMIER said the hon. member stated that when he was in office he lent the outside districts something like £100,000 for water supply without getting interest. There was no foundation whatever for the statement. Every loan that had been made from the Treasury was scheduled on the back of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

LICENSING BOARDS BILL—COMMITTEE.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that the Speaker leave the Chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider this Bill in detail.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he would take that opportunity of saying a word or two with regard to this Bill. At the opening of the session the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Macfarlane, in referring to the actions of the Government and the Bills that had been passed, or were not passed, made this statement:—

> "The Licensing Boards Act was also mentioned, and he believed that also was a great improvement on the previous system, but even in this there was a defect which the Colonial Secretary must have observed. If the Colonial Secretary had licensing boards in every district such scenes as that at Murphy's Creek would not take place. He did not blame anyone for this, but he hoped that the Act would be improved so that such scenes could not happen again."

Now, it was a very easy and convenient matter to call this a "scene," and outside the House he (Mr. O'Sullivan) asked the hon. member was he going to call for the papers and let the country know what this "scene" was, and he replied that he was not. As he (Mr. O'Sullivan) was the principal actor in that "scene," as the hon. member chose to call it, he felt that that name was inapplicable, and that the hon. member was wrong in calling it that because the expression implied more than happened on that occasion. The facts were simply these:—A respectable man named Cullen had been for some years at work in the bush, and had collected a little money, and on going into the sale-room of Mr. Robinson, at Toowoomba, he bought a public-house at Murphy's Creek as a licensed public-house. He paid his money for it, and when he

came to take possession of the public-house he found himself sold. He found that the house was actually empty, and that the license had been removed and granted to a new house. The man had a first-rate character. He was known for years to the member for Maranoa, and he had also a good character from the Mayor of Toowoomba. By some management he was refused a license at Murphy's Creek, and of course it was impossible for him to apply again sooner than a month, and then the license must not be granted by a less number of magistrates than the number who refused it. At the end of the month he (Mr. O'Sullivan) happened to be up that way on other business, and he came in to Murphy's Creek on the day that the fresh application for a license was to be heard. He found that there was no magistrates present when he arrived, and that only a policeman was in charge. He was told that a telegram had been received by the policeman from Captain Townley, intimating that he could not be up until the following day. Subsequently he found another magistrate at the place—a gentleman whom he had never seen before, a Dr. Howlin, who lived at Toowoomba; and a little while after Mr. Turner, who was also a magistrate, also put in an appearance. When the policeman saw that magistrates were present, he went out of the court-house and got his horse. He might here mention that Mr. Murray, a lawyer acting for Cullen, was also present. When he (Mr. O'Sullivan) saw the policeman going off on his horse, he directed the lawyer to go across the railway opening and tell him that there would be a court held at 12 o'clock; that the magistrates would require his attendance; and that if his business was so urgent that he could not wait, he should leave the keys of the court-house. The answer that the policeman gave to the lawyer was, that he himself had adjourned the court at 10 o'clock, and that he was not going to open it for anybody else; and the man then started away and was not seen until night. The court, it would be seen, was adjourned by a policeman at 10 o'clock, when it could not be legally opened or adjourned until 12 o'clock. In any case, however, the policeman had no power to adjourn it. They (the three magistrates) went up to the court-house at the proper time and inquired from the policeman's wife if the door could be opened, and she replied, "No," and that it was locked. At their request she supplied them with some chairs, and they sat on the back verandah, disposed of the business of the court, and came away after doing all that was required. In the evening, as the policeman came home, he (Mr. O'Sullivan) sent the lawyer and a witness with the proceedings of the court written up, and a message that he sent the documents as chairman of the board, and that they should be taken charge of as records of the court. The policeman very impertinently told the lawyer that he did not recognise them, and that evening he (Mr. O'Sullivan) came home and sent a report to the Colonial Secretary. The proceedings of the court and his report were here, and he thought that the member for Ipswich would have called for the papers, as he had talked about the "scene" at Murphy's Creek. The papers had not been called for. Letters had appeared in the newspapers giving every description of the business but the true one; in fact, so much was written in the newspapers about the matter that the Colonial Secretary sent the proceedings to the Attorney-General for his opinion as to whether they were legal or not; and when he heard that such a step had been taken he defied either the Colonial Secretary or Attorney-General to find any flaw in the proceedings, they being quite legal. He made a complaint about the policeman, and he believed that to do justice to him he should have insisted upon his dismissal; but he did not require that any punishment should be inflicted, except that the man should be removed from a place where he did not seem to understand his business. That was the whole "scene" about which the hon. member for Ipswich made so much at the opening of Parliament. Perhaps it would not be out of place if he also referred to another statement made by the hon. member. In the same speech he said that the Minister for Works had dismissed thirty men from the railway works in Ipswich and replaced them by favourites and political friends of his own.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is out of order. He is not speaking to the question.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said that, at any rate, he was in order in referring to the licensing question. He would simply say that both statements were utterly untrue in the way that the hon. member gave them.

Mr. MACFARLANE said that when he described the proceedings at Murphy's Creek as a "scene," he took his impressions from the newspaper reports. It was reported that the licensing board met under the verandah of the court-house, and if that was true it was a scene, for a license ought only to be granted inside of a court-house, in his opinion. As to the remarks made with reference to the acting clerk of petty sessions at Murphy's Creek, he had to state that the chairman of the licensing board at Ipswich wrote to the officer on the previous day intimating that no court would be held at the appointed time, and that was the reason why the court-house was shut and the court was to be held on the following day.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he wished to explain that a licensing court could only be adjourned by a magistrate, and not by a policeman. The hon. member did not seem to know anything about the Act.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he had made the statement as it appeared in the public prints.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: I beg the hon. member's pardon. No such statement appeared in the papers.

Mr. MACFARLANE said that Captain Townley himself had told him that he had written to the officer at Murphy's Creek to say that the court would be held on the following day.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said that Captain Townley did right, but his instructions were to get the court adjourned, and the policeman should have gone to a magistrate to have the adjournment made; instead of doing so, he adjourned the court himself.

Question put and passed, and the House went into Committee.

Preamble postponed.

On clause 1—"Repeal of section 2 of 43 Vict., No. 15"—

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he should take the opportunity of again referring to the licensing question at Murphy's Creek. It struck him that something like the fine Roman hand of the member for Ipswich could be recognised in the following paragraph, which appeared in the *Queensland Times* for June 24:—

"Had a board been appointed for the places named (namely, Laidley, Gatton, and Murphy's Creek) the exhibition which took place at Murphy's Creek a short time since would not have been possible. We should not have seen a license which had been refused by one bench—composed principally of local magistrates—granted by another composed, with one exception, of

non-resident justices, and the undignified *rôle* assumed by the latter on the occasion would have been a happy impossibility."

It was by no means the fact, as was asserted in the paragraph, that Cullen's license was first refused by local magistrates and afterwards granted by magistrates who were not local magistrates. Mr. Turner, who sat on the bench, was a justice of the peace residing within seven or eight miles of Murphy's Creek. Dr. Howlin was living eight or ten miles from Murphy's Creek, and was an elector and magistrate of the district, and he (Mr. O'Sullivan) was himself a freeholder and an elector of the district, and Mr. J. C. Turner was also a freeholder. They were all in favour of granting the license to the man Cullen. The refusal of the license was in the first instance a job, and as to the version that was printed afterwards, of the proceedings when the license was granted, it was merely done to deceive people. Of course, when Captain Townley, the Police Magistrate, was present on the first occasion, he was there merely in his official capacity and was not aware of the little conspiracies that went on at the little shanty, bush court-houses in the district. He believed himself that these court-houses should not be so numerous as they were—there were too many jobs carried on at them—and that there should be no court-house established between Little Liverpool and the Main Range except at Gatton, where the light of day would be upon it. Anyone who had lived in the West Moreton district for any length of time must know the wants of it, and surely there was no occasion for limiting the powers of the district magistrates. He thoroughly believed that it was a great mistake to appoint little local boards, as there was sure to be always a large amount of petty bickerings.

Mr. MACFARLANE wished to state that he was not the author of the letter or article referred to by the hon. member for Stanley, and he was sorry the hon. member should have taken so much to heart the reference he (Mr. Macfarlane) made some months ago to what had occurred at Murphy's Creek. It was with the idea that the present Act could be very materially improved that he had referred to that matter; at the same time, he had said nothing whatever about the facts beyond saying that he had seen a certain gentleman acting in the position of a justice of the peace whom he had not seen before, and had not seen since in the same position. He should do his best to support the passing of the Bill before the Committee, as he believed it would be an improvement on the present Act.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he had drawn attention to the case because some people had recognised the treatment of the man Cullen in the first instance as being something akin to lynch law. As regarded the statement that was made that he (Mr. O'Sullivan) had gone to Murphy's Creek purposely with the object of forming a court, it was nothing of the kind, as he, in company with the Minister for Lands and Mr. R. J. Smith, had been to the tin mines at Crow's Nest, and was on his return when the court met at Murphy's Creek. From what he knew of the applicant, Mr. Cullen, he should, had he been in Ipswich, have supported the application made by that man.

Question put and passed.

On clause 2—"Appointments and constitution of licensing boards."

In answer to Mr. GRIFFITH,

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that he intended to amend the clause by moving an addition to subsection B, as follows—

"Provided that no mayor of any municipality or member nominated by a municipality shall adjudicate on any application for a license outside the boundaries of such municipality."

That would meet, to a great extent, an objection he had understood the hon. gentleman to make to the clause. He proposed, also, to make some amendments in subsection C. In the meantime, he would move the amendment he had read.

Mr. MOREHEAD wished to point out that an evil which existed under the present Licensing Act was not amended by the Bill before the Committee—namely, that publicans and others, who were looked upon as sinners, were not allowed to act on a board, whilst Good Templars and others belonging to the order of the hon. member for Logan were allowed to do so. He could quite understand that the owner of a distillery or the owner of a public-house was quite as able to give an honest opinion as to whether a license should be granted as men who had taken an oath not to do certain things, and he saw no reason why the one set of men should be debarred from sitting on a board and not the other. He did not make those remarks in any antagonistic spirit to the hon. member for the Logan or others who held that hon. member's opinions, but he contended that if one class—the class he had mentioned—was debarred, they should be debarred also from sitting on a licensing board.

Mr. McLEAN did not consider the cases mentioned by the hon. member at all analogous. The refusal of the license made no difference to those on the bench, but the granting of the license was of immense benefit to the individual who got it. He could say distinctly that he never knew of any Good Templar sitting on the Brisbane Bench, though there might have been abstainers there. The hon. member for Mitchell would find on inquiry that there was no oath required by that organization; the Good Templar only took an obligation to abstain from intoxicating liquor. It had been stated so often that Good Templars took an oath and sat on the Brisbane Bench that he thought it just as well to give the statement a flat denial.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: Where did the forty-one magistrates who sat on the Brisbane Bench come from?

Mr. McLEAN said he knew of magistrates having been brought from Gympie and all parts of the colony to sit on the licensing bench, but they were not teetotallers. He himself had been asked to sit, but refused, considering that the licensing bench should consist of magistrates who were locally resident in the district.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he was inclined to add to the clause that, in addition to those sinners—publicans and others—who were held up under this legislation as men who were dishonest and could not be trusted to administer justice in any way, the words "also no member of any society interested in the prevention of the sale of intoxicating liquors." Magistrates connected with such societies should not be allowed to sit. He would much rather have free-trade in the matter, because good men could be got from both sides; as good men could be got from among the brewers, distillers, and publicans as from any other class. It was a mistake to suppose, looking at the matter in its lowest light—that of self-interest—that publicans would be anxious to grant an undue number of licenses. A publican by so doing would be creating an opponent to himself. No doubt those who held the views of the hon. member for Logan—and he said it with all good-nature—were very much more bitter and unjust and narrow-minded than those on the other side. They thought, and probably to a certain extent rightly, that a great amount

of harm had arisen and would arise from the sale of liquor; but if they had their way they would tyrannise over the whole community. They who were in a minority would like to rule with a rod of iron and make everybody, if they could, members of these various societies. He did not think the legislature had a right to come in and absolutely debar those men who were said by the hon. member for Logan to be directly interested in granting licenses from sitting on these boards. So far as the publican was concerned, he was interested in the other direction, and could not possibly derive any benefit from the increase of public-houses. When the proper time came he would therefore propose what he had indicated as an amendment.

Mr. THORN had no objection to the proposal of the hon. member for Mitchell. It was a very good idea.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN asked why mayors should not be allowed to adjudicate outside their own districts?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the amendment was principally necessary in the neighbourhood of Brisbane where there would be a large number of mayors on the bench; it was intended to prevent a return to anything like the old system.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: Does it apply all over the colony?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said it would apply all over the colony; but it could not apply in any other place to anything like the extent it would in Brisbane, because there would be so many municipalities in the district.

Mr. FEEZ said it would be wise to confine the board to such magistrates as resided in the district, and not import them from other districts.

Mr. FRASER asked what special advantage was to be expected from the mayors of those municipalities being excluded? The present licensing board had given general satisfaction, and the amendment would open up the old contentions; local interests would be brought to bear on the subject.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said this action had become necessary because in another place they insisted on putting mayors of municipalities into the Bill.

Mr. THORN could not agree with the hon. member for South Brisbane that the present boards had worked satisfactorily. He knew of places where licenses had been refused, and the effect had been the free sale of liquor in shanties. It was far better to have one well-kept public-house than five or six sly-grog shops. He himself believed in free-trade. He knew of places where almost every other house was a public-house, and where he had not seen a drunken man. If they had a little more free-trade in grog selling there would be fewer drunkards.

Question—That the words proposed to be added be so added—put and passed.

On the proposition of the COLONIAL SECRETARY, the reference in the subsection to mayors was omitted, and "justices of the peace, not exceeding five in number," were specified as members of the board.

In answer to Mr. AMHURST,

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that the terms of the clause included chairmen of divisional boards.

On the motion of the COLONIAL SECRETARY, the words "or who is a brewer or distiller" were included in the description of persons not to be appointed members of the board; and the word "landlord" was added to the list of persons disqualified to sit.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 3—"Short title"—passed as printed.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that the preamble, as read, stand part of the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he happened to know that an amendment was going to be made on clause 2, but the hon. member who wished to move it was not now present. He hoped the Colonial Secretary would wait a few moments to give the hon. member an opportunity of doing so.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY explained that all the clauses had been passed, and that an amendment could not be made upon the preamble.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he had just come into the Chamber, and all he could say was that it was certainly taking a very improper advantage of his absence, as it was well known that he intended to move an amendment.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that to give the hon. member an opportunity of moving his amendment, he should recommit the Bill.

Preamble put and passed.

Bill reported with amendments, and recommitted for the further consideration of subsection E, clause 2.

Mr. MOREHEAD moved, as an addition to the persons not to be appointed on the boards, "or who is a member of any society interested in the prevention of the sale of fermented or spirituous liquors."

Mr. McLEAN thought the hon. member was giving the Government a very difficult task to perform. How could the fact be proved? Was the Government to ask any gentleman on the licensing bench to give a sworn declaration that he was not a member of any temperance society? There were many members of temperance societies who were not publicly known to be such.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: They ought not to be ashamed of it.

Mr. McLEAN said they were not ashamed of it, but they did not choose to come to the front. Personally he had no objection to the amendment, but it would impose a difficult task on the Government.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said the same objection would hold good with regard to the other disqualifications. What difference did it make to a landlord whether grog was sold in his house or not? All he wanted was rent for his house, whether paid by a publican or not. Then there was the wholesale spirit-dealer—what had he got to do with it? His opinion was that the Licensing Boards Act of last year was so good that it did not require amending. The Ipswich Licensing Board, under that Act, could do the whole of the work for East and West Moreton, and the board would not require meddling with for years. Taking that view of the case, he should like to see the present Bill read a third time that day six months. If the Ministry of the day had the appointment of the boards they would do their best to put honest men upon them—whether landlords or members of temperance societies, or what not.

Mr. MACFARLANE said the amendment was certainly not an improvement on the clause. There would be great difficulty in proving that any person sitting on a licensing board was a member of a temperance society, or interested in putting down the sale of liquor. The same disqualification might apply to members of churches, who, it might be assumed, were interested in seeing that

liquor was not consumed in too great a quantity. The people who sold liquor, whether wholesale or retail, were a privileged few. They had to pay a license fee which rendered them privileged persons, and they did what not one in a thousand was permitted to do. The very fact of there not being free-trade in drink showed that a danger existed, and that it was necessary to keep the consumption within bounds. When a house got a license it immediately doubled in value, and the disability of landlords and persons interested in the traffic from sitting on licensing boards was the law all over the civilised world—and very properly so.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he had brought forward the amendment advisedly, because he thought they had had too much of the great intolerance of narrow-minded men—and there was no intolerance greater than that exhibited by Good Templars and members of temperance societies. The subsection as it stood was simply an insult to a body of highly respectable men. The very fact of their having obtained a license went to show that they were respectable men and was a guarantee of their good behaviour. It had been shown over and over again that the so-called Good Templars had gone to the licensing boards in Brisbane, and the scenes that had taken place there were a disgrace to the colony. The people to whom he was referring were the heaviest-taxed class of the community, and their character was witnessed to by Act of Parliament. If they were to be debarred from sitting on the licensing boards, why should not those also be debarred who were bound by oath to do all they could to prevent the sale of liquor?

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he was surprised at the hon. member (Mr. Macfarlane) making such an unscrupulous statement as that when a house obtained a license it doubled in value. If that were so, he would at once convert the dozen houses he owned in Ipswich into public-houses and get rid of them. But his own experience had been different, and a house of his which was formerly licensed, but was now used as a private house, paid him much better now than then, and it was always tenanted. Would the hon. member point out one instance where a house had doubled its value from getting a license? He challenged him to prove it.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he knew of an instance at Ipswich where a house had not only doubled but trebled in value from the fact of its having got a license. He could name it to the hon. member privately. The public-houses at the corners of streets would not fetch half the rent for any other purpose. The hon. member also forgot that while public-houses increased in value the property in the immediate vicinity deteriorated in value, because people declined to live next door to a public-house. It was no new thing, and it was well known to people outside, if it was not known to members of the House.

Mr. WALSH said the question was not whether or not the value of property was deteriorated, but whether it was advisable that members of an order who were bound to oppose public-houses in all shapes or forms should be members of licensing boards. He thought not; because, even though they might act wisely, there would always be a suspicion as to their motives. If he understood the object of the order, it was to decrease the number of public-houses throughout the colony, and a very good object it was too; but it had been proved in many cases that members of the order had gone to licensing meetings with the full intention to refuse licenses for houses whether they were required or not. They ought to be debarred from being members of the boards as well as wholesale wine and spirit merchants were; indeed, he did not know whether it would not be preferable to have the latter as members of the boards, because it would be to their interest to have respectable houses established. He thought it might be fairly left to the Government of the day to select members of the boards—they would select men who were not extreme Good Templars and men to whom no objection could be taken in any other way. Although he was not a member of any temperance order, he had strong sympathies with the temperance movement, and he must say he believed it would be to the interests of the movement if temperance men were not allowed to be members of the boards.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Mr. Perkins) said he was very unwilling to have anything to say on the subject, because he was quite sure that it had received the serious attention of his hon. colleague, the Colonial Secretary, who he knew was inclined to do what was fair to all parties. He did not think it was possible to introduce a measure which would be perfect or which would satisfy the requirements of all persons, and therefore he had not interfered in regard to the Bill under discussion. He felt so satisfied with the working of the Act in force that he almost thought it unnecessary to make any amendment in it. It was a great improvement on previous legislation; the indecencies which they had been in the habit of witnessing had been removed, and in his travels throughout the colony he found that the generality of people were satisfied. If any wrong was done or a respectable man was refused a license the guilty parties were known. Four or five men of respectable character undertook the business of licensing, and they had undivided responsibility which they could not avoid. Still, he found that through the actions of church-people and others the distrust of one man for another was increasing every day. The second section of the Licensing Act forbade spirit merchants or brewers from sitting on the licensing benches, but there were butchers, drapers, and many other tradespeople he could name who were more objectionable as members of licensing benches than brewers or spirit merchants would be. It certainly did seem strange that it should be necessary to introduce such a provision into an Act of Parliament. Was there a brewer or a spirit merchant worth his salt, or who had any claim to respectability, who would encourage the crime of drunkenness, or give licenses to people unworthy to hold them? Spirit merchants and brewers of standing did all they could to discountenance the granting of licenses to undesirable persons, and if any of them lent themselves to any unworthy or improper actions they soon came to grief. He knew of cases where the greatest of tyranny and persecution had been exercised by the temperance societies. The fact of the matter was that if a man applied for a license for a public-house he was at once stamped as dishonest—as one who was likely to do something wrong, and therefore he must be distrusted and scouted; the police were put on to watch him; and, in addition to paying heavy licensing fees and travelling expenses, he had to engage a lawyer to watch his interests. He stood there to say a word in favour of the publicans. There were unworthy men amongst them who should not get licenses, and there were none more eager than the respectable licensed victuallers themselves to banish such men from the trade. If any alteration was to be made in the constitution of the licensing boards, the Good Templars who went about the country roaring and fomenting strife and contention should be excluded from them. There was no respectable man in the trade who was not anxious to promote sobriety, to encourage people to keep respectable hotels, and to make the calling

as honourable in other people's estimation as any other. It was a notorious fact that there were many persons who were invited—he did not say hired—to attend the licensing meetings for the purpose of supporting particular applications. He had been slandered over the Murphy's Creek case: it was said that the house was his—that it was transferred to Perkins and Company, and that altogether the transaction was a very curious one. These statements were made by untruthful newspaper writers. He had borne the slander in silence up to the present, but now that he had mentioned the matter he would say that he had nothing to do with the transactions; he did not know that the license was being applied for, and he did not know that the hon. member for Stanley was coming there. He thought it was sufficient if he denied the statements which had been made respecting his connection with the case.

Mr. BEATTIE said that until about two years ago he used to sit on the bench, but he had discontinued attending for the reason that he was tormented by applicants who wished him to support their applications for licenses and by persons who wished him to oppose them. He made up his mind that he should not go on the bench again until some other system was adopted. Justices of the peace were not only tormented by the applicants for licenses, but by the owners of houses who wished to have licenses granted to their tenants. He thought that was most objectionable. In justice to the magistrates in the metropolis, he must say that he never yet knew a Good Templar to sit on the bench in Brisbane. He had known temperance gentlemen to sit on the bench, but not Good Templars. He should support the Bill, as he believed it would do good service.

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted—put.

The Committee divided:—

AYES, 18.

Messrs. Palmer, McIlwraith, Macrossan, Perkins, Beor, Morehead, Walsh, O'Sullivan, Sheaffe, Hill, Persse, Amhurst, H. Palmer, Baynes, Hamilton, Swanwick, Archer, and Thorn.

NOES, 14.

Messrs. Bailey, Beattie, Grimes, King, Griffith, Dickson, McLean, Douglas, Macfarlane, Fraser, Price, Garrick, Miles, and Norton.

Mr. MOREHEAD moved, as an amendment, that in page 2, line 26, after the word "distiller," the word "or" should be omitted, with the view of inserting the words "or member of such society."

Mr. GRIFFITH said it was strange that a division should take place like that, upon such an important question, without the Minister in charge of the Bill saying a single word upon it. It was almost like a party vote, for hon. members came in, looked around to see how Ministers were voting, and then—and not till then—sat on the same side. His supposition of course was, that the Government were going to oppose the amendment. A proposition was made that any person who was a member of a temperance society should be ineligible to be a member of a licensing board. As an amendment that was quite unnecessary, and it was, in addition, a grievous insult to an excellent section of the community. It could not be viewed in any other light. At first he supposed it was a sort of joke, especially when he found that the Minister in charge of the Bill took no notice of it, and he was much astonished when, the House being nearly empty, a division was taken in that manner. The Government ought to give some reasons for adopting such an amendment as this.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the hon. gentleman might very well allow the Government to look after their own affairs. He (Mr. Palmer) did not think it necessary to say anything on the amendment, holding it to be a matter of very little consequence. If the description given by the hon. member for the Logan was correct, the Good Templars did not think it worth their while to go on to the bench to oppose the sale of spirituous liquors, and the amendment did not therefore touch the teetotallers and Good Templars at all. The amendment was levelled against the members of a society—he did not know what it was—who were opposed to the sale of spirituous liquors and the granting of licenses; and it was quite as fair that they should be kept off the boards as brewers, distillers, and landlords. He must say that he did not believe that the amendment would do any good, and, on the other hand, it would not do any harm, nor did he see where the insult came in, any more than in the clause relating to brewers, distillers, and publicans.

Mr. PERSSE said that after all the discussion he had heard he thought the whole of the clause might be left out. The present system was working very well. As to objecting to landlords, publicans, and brewers, there was an equal reason for objecting to those who were known to be antagonistic to the sale of liquors.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he had explained several times that the Bill was forced upon them by the amendments made in another place in the Bill of last session; and, as regarded a district like Brisbane, where the Government had no power to appoint a licensing board under the present Act, such a board under the present Act would consist of nothing but mayors. By the Bill now under consideration the number of members was limited to five. The Bill was necessary to enable the Government to appoint an independent board, and, no matter how many mayors were on the licensing board, a mayor could only vote in his own division.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he did not understand the thing yet, and took exception to the leader of the Opposition saying that it was a party question. He himself (Mr. O'Sullivan) candidly confessed that he wanted the amendment to pass so as to spoil the Bill altogether. His object was to throw the Bill out, believing that it would do more harm than good. He intended to move, when he had the opportunity, that it be read this day six months. The present Act worked very well during the last twelve months; why should it now be meddled with? He should use every exertion to throw the Bill out, and he hoped the Colonial Secretary would let it be slaughtered among the other innocents in a week or two.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he would again explain that when the licensing boards were first appointed under the Act no mayors had been created under the provisions of the Divisional Boards Act; but that Act had created a number of presidents of shires and chairmen of divisional boards, all of whom were entitled to sit upon licensing boards; so that the Government had no opportunity of appointing any members. In order that there might be no mistake, he would read part of the clause in the present Licensing Act, as follows—

"The Governor in Council may from time to time appoint not less than three nor more than five fit and proper persons, being justices of the peace, to be the licensing board for any district, and in appointing such board regard shall be had to the following rules—

"1. The police magistrate of the district (if any) shall be one member of the board, and shall be chairman thereof, and in his absence the board shall elect a chairman for the day from amongst the members present at any meeting.

"2. When any district or part of a district shall be incorporated as a municipality, the mayor of such municipality shall be another member of the board unless disqualified under the next subsection."

Mr. O'SULLIVAN : It would be the simplest thing in the world to repeal that.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that was just what the Bill did. It gave one vote in each licensing district to a mayor, however many there might be, and the other five members of the board were appointed by the Government.

Mr. THORN said as soon as another House was elected the Divisional Boards Act would be repealed ; the outside districts would return no member who was at all favourable to it. He had given his vote, like the hon. member for Stanley, only in order to humbug the Bill. Had it not been for the Divisional Boards Act the difficulty might not have arisen.

Question—That the word "or" be omitted—put and passed.

Mr. MOREHEAD moved the insertion of the words " or member of such society."

Mr. BEATTIE said that according to the amendment it would become the duty of every person who became entitled to be a member of these boards, to notify to the Government whether he was a member of a teetotal society or not. That was ridiculous, and he did not suppose that anyone in the position of Colonial Secretary would make such inquiries. He did not believe there was any society in existence such as was indicated by the amendment of the hon. member, though there might be men who considered it to be unadvisable that public-houses should be opened indiscriminately.

Mr. THORN said the hon. member need not be uneasy ; there were very few like the hon. members for Ipswich and Logan. He had been in a mining township where there was a Good Templars' hall, and the landlord of the hotel where he was staying assured him that the Good Templars were his best customers. They came in in droves at about half-past 10 and stopped till half-past 3 in the morning, and they did not leave till they had their skins full of whisky. His experience had been that the more the sale of grog was fettered the more drunkards there were, and that when public-houses were closed shanties were opened.

Mr. MACFARLANE said that two members of the Committee hadstated that they gave their votes for the purpose of throwing ridicule upon the Bill, and he was astonished that the Colonial Secretary should have been caught in the trap. He expected that the Colonial Secretary would have stood by his own clause. With regard to the remarks of the hon. member for Northern Downs, he might state that Good Templars' halls were let for a variety of purposes, and that the persons seen by the hon. member frequenting the public-house might not have been Good Templars at all.

Mr. THORN said they called themselves Good Templars, and one of them was the grand worshipful master. The hall in question was in Stanthorpe, and it was mainly owned by the landlord of the hotel, who stated that his best customers were the members of the temperance lodge.

Question put and passed.

The Bill was reported to the House, and the third reading was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL—COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the COLONIAL SECRETARY, the House went into Committee to consider the Bill.

Preamble postponed.

On clause 1—

Mr. GRIFFITH said it had been pointed out in the course of the debate on the second reading that some difficulties might arise in the interpretation of this Bill. New municipalities might be created wholly or partly out of old municipalities, or they might be created out of two old municipalites, one older than the other. There were a great number of other possible cases which he need not then enumerate. As an illustration, however, he would suppose that a part of the outlying district now forming part of the division of Woollongabba were included in the proposed new municipality of South Brisbane. He had prepared an amendment on the Bill, but he did not know whether the Colonial Secretary intended to accept it.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he must admit that, upon looking over the clause again—although he believed it fully carried out what he intended—he thought it was not as clear as the amendment drawn by the hon. member for North Brisbane, who had devoted a great deal of his talent to the matter. He proposed that the hon. member should have the credit of his amendment ; and he would rather, therefore, that the hon. member proposed it himself. He might mention that the amendment in no way differed from the intention of the clause, although it explained it more clearly.

Mr. KING said he desired to call attention to the inconvenience arising from the excessive size of some of the municipalities, such as Maryborough. It was extremely desirable that some of the outlying portions of these municipalities should be cut off, and it would be very hard in those cases if they did not receive the endowment given to the new municipalities, because they had received little or no expenditure from the old municipalities with which they had been so long connected.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said it would be quite impossible to deal exceptionally with such cases as that of Maryborough, which deserved no commiseration because it was at the outset so greedy. It could not get sufficient within its boundaries, and now it must suffer for its greediness.

Mr. BEATTIE also failed to see how provision could be made to meet such cases.

Mr. THORN said this was a rather important matter, as far as Maryborough was concerned. The Salt Water Creek road, for instance, had been altogether ignored by the municipality ; and as a matter of fact the hon. member for Maryborough (Mr. King) had when in office contributed pretty handsomely towards the making of the road. He hoped the members for the district would see, in the interests of this important part of Wide Bay, that some provision was made to meet the exceptional circumstances of the case.

Mr. GRIFFITH moved that clause 1 read as follows :—

" Whenever a new municipality or division is constituted by the severance of a portion of a municipality or division, the amount of endowment payable to such new municipality or division shall be computed as if such new municipality or division had been first constituted at the time when it first formed part of the municipality or division from which it is severed."

Agreed to.

Mr. GRIFFITH moved the following new clause, which was also agreed to :—

2. Whenever a new municipality or division is constituted by the severance of a portion of a municipal or divisional district, and the addition of the whole or part of another municipal or divisional district, or of an outlying district ;

And whenever any municipality or division is constituted by the union of two or more municipalities or divisions with or without the addition of part of another municipal or divisional district, or of an outlying district;

And whenever any outlying district is annexed to a municipality or division;

And in every other case in which any municipality or division comprises for the time being an area the whole of which did not first become comprised within a municipal or divisional district at the same time;

Then in every such case, separate accounts shall be kept, for so long as may be necessary, of the rates raised within each distinct portion of the area of such municipality or division, and the amount of endowment payable to such municipality or division shall be computed with respect to each such portion separately, and the total endowment shall be such as would have been payable if each of such portions formed a separate municipality or division which was constituted at the time when such portion first became comprised in the area of a municipality or division.

Mr. GRIFFITH moved that the following words be added to clause 2 as printed, "and the Divisional Boards Act of 1879."

Clause amended and agreed to.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that the title of the Bill be amended, so as to read "A Bill to amend the Laws relating to the Endowment of Municipalities and Divisions."

Mr. THORN thought this was an opportune time to put in a further amendment with regard to main roads, for which there was no provision whatever. He did not think the Bill would have gone through committee so easily without there was a promise given by the Government that they intended to make the main roads of the colony. There should be some amendment inserted in the Bill to enable the different municipalities and shire councils to receive something for that purpose.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: There is a Bill on the subject.

Mr. THORN said he was glad to hear it, but he had not seen the Bill. There were a great many Bills on the paper that he would like to see got on with a little faster instead of the Estimates. However, he was glad to hear that the Government intended to press forward all the measures they had on the business paper, and to bring in one dealing with main roads. Another matter he thought required to be altered was the tax upon improvements. That was one of the most iniquitous taxes under the Divisional Boards Act, and he hoped it would be amended.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No, it won't.

Mr. THORN said he would ask, further, what the Government intended to do with the roads of the colony when all the loan votes were exhausted? They could not expect that settlers in the southern districts would make roads out of their own pockets, if the North was to be let off scot free. How were the roads between such places as Cooktown and Palmerville, and Port Douglas and Thornborough, where the revenue raised would not be sufficient to pay a clerk's salary, to be made and maintained? Were they to be neglected? They knew that in the tropics the rains came down with a vengeance and swept away all improvements; and where was the money to come from to replace them after they were washed away? There should be some provision made for the people in the North. They could not go on year after year borrowing money to make roads; and he hoped the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill would take the hint and see that these matters were rectified.

Mr. AMHURST regretted that the hon. member (Mr. Thorn), who was once the Premier of the colony, was not more dignified, because that a man who had occupied that proud position should expose so much folly as that hon. member always did in the House was rather degrading to the colony. If he (Mr. Thorn) had taken the trouble to look at the business paper he would have seen that the United Municipalities Bill had been in the hands of hon. members for at least two months, and that Bill settled the whole affair in reference to the main roads of the colony. He hoped the hon. member would allow business to go on, and not expose his ignorance in the way he had done lately.

Mr. THORN said he noticed that the United Municipalities Bill was at the bottom of the business paper. He should like to see it on the top and Supply at the bottom, for when once the Estimates were through the Government would not be able to keep the House together, and the usual slaughter of the innocents would follow.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he was sick of hearing the hon. gentleman's opinion as to how the business should be conducted. The Government would conduct their affairs in their own way, and not in the way that the hon. gentleman wished.

Mr. KING said he must remind the member for Northern Downs that the House would only sit for a certain number of months, and that in the time which he took to recommend that the Bill should be placed on the top of the paper the measure could be passed.

Mr. THORN said there was another serious matter to which he wished to refer. There was a new class of labour being introduced from Ceylon, which would depopulate the country more than Polynesian labour was doing.

The CHAIRMAN said the hon. member was going too far. The question before the Committee was the amendment of the title to the Bill, not the Polynesian question.

Amendment agreed to.

Preamble passed as printed.

On the motion of the COLONIAL SECRETARY, the Chairman left the chair and reported the Bill with amendments; the report was adopted, and the third reading of the Bill made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

GOLD MINING APPEALS BILL—SECOND READING.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he did not think it necessary to say much about this Bill. Hon. members would probably know that the Goldfields Act of 1874 provided that appeals from the warden should be held in the district courts, and that fresh evidence might then be produced. The Act worked very well and to the satisfaction of the miners until 1878, when a change was made in the District Courts Act which had been acted on ever since on the goldfields. The change provided that in all cases of appeal to a district court the notes of evidence and proceedings taken and heard in the inferior court should be the only evidence and proceedings before the court on the hearing of the appeal, unless both parties consented to, or the presiding judge directed the reception of, fresh evidence. This alteration had the effect of preventing fresh evidence being produced in gold-mining appeals to the district court; and on his last visit to the North he found that the provision had given a considerable amount of dissatisfaction to the miners. He spoke to the legal men on the goldfields and to others, and the conclusion he came to was that the clause in the District Courts Act was not a desirable one; and for the purpose of meeting the objection he had introduced the Bill now before the House, providing that all mining appeal cases should be heard as provided by the

Goldfields Act of 1874, anything in any other Act to the contrary notwithstanding. It simply placed gold-mining appeals in the same position that they occupied after the Goldfields Act of 1874, and before the passing of the District Courts Act of 1878. He begged to move the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. GRIFFITH said there could be no objection to the principle enunciated by the Minister for Works. The District Courts Act of 1878 was, however, never intended to apply to gold-mining appeals, and for his part he did not think that it did. He knew that some of the Judges thought otherwise. It was certainly necessary that the legislature should take some step in the matter, but he should have preferred to have seen a declaratory Act passed, declaring that the Act of 1878 did not apply to gold mining appeals. He did not think that an amending Act was required.

Question put and passed.

The committal of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

PACIFIC ISLANDS LABOURERS BILL—COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the COLONIAL SECRETARY, the House went into Committee to consider this Bill.

On the motion of the COLONIAL SECRETARY, that the preamble be postponed—

Mr. THORN said that he thought the preamble should be altered altogether, inasmuch as there was another class of labour which should be included in the Bill. It was only a day or two ago that on glancing at the *Courier* newspaper he found that Singhalese were being brought to the colony, and to give hon. members an idea of what was being done he would read the extract he referred to—

"A detachment of Singhalese labourers arrived on Tuesday last by the R.M.S. Brisbane. They are under engagement to Messrs. Christison Bros., of Lammermuir, and have started out to their new scene of toil."

Lammermuir was in the interior, and therefore it was evident that these Singhalese were not required for semi-tropical agriculture on the coast. The writer went on to say—

"The men are a fine active and intelligent lot, and to an old Anglo-Indian appear far preferable to the plodding celestial or the ponderous kanaka. The importation of this class of labour, however, shows that though kanakas may be confined to the coast, more dangerous competitors in the labour field may be easily introduced. In India or Ceylon a coolie labourer can be engaged at a sum so nominal as to appear actually absurd to European minds, and importers of labour from those fields obtain coloured servants much cheaper than they could hire kanakas; besides, the Singhalese are hardy and very industrious under good discipline, and do not cost the employer nearly as much for medicine as kanakas. If we are to have coloured labour in the North, nothing better than the offspring of the coolies the British took to Ceylon on assuming possession thereof could be desired; but the introduction of them here is likely to attract attention and be discussed by our legislators."

That was from the Townsville correspondent of the *Courier*, and the letter was dated September 6th. Having read that letter, he took the earliest opportunity offered to him of raising a discussion on the subject, and of asking that a clause should be inserted into the Bill now before the Committee providing for the introduction of Singhalese labourers into the colony for coast labour only, and not for station work in the interior. He wished to know whether the Government could see their way to provide for that class of labour.

Question put and passed.

Clause 1—"Repeal of Polynesian Labourers Act of 1868"—put and passed.

On clause 2—"Definition of terms"—

Mr. GRIFFITH said he wished to call attention to the definition of the term "islander" and that of "labourer," as there was rather a strongly-marked difference between the two. The Bill dealt with "labourers" who were defined in the second clause to be Pacific Islanders who had been brought to Queensland and the stipulated time for whose return to their islands had not arrived. But after three years the Bill was not to deal with them, whilst one of the greatest grievances complained of was that after the termination of their contract term of service these people were employed as domestic servants or gardeners or otherwise. He thought that the term "labourer" should mean any Pacific Islander brought to Queensland, whether his first engagement had expired or not, and with that view he would move the omission of the words—

"And the stipulated time for whose return to his native island has not arrived."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that the proposed amendment appeared to him to be the introduction of a system of slavery pure and simple. By what right they could assume to themselves the power of keeping a Pacific Islander who had been brought to Queensland under the provisions of the present Act, or under those of the intended Act, from doing what he liked, or entering into what employment he liked, he (Mr. Palmer) was at a loss to understand. He should like to know how they were to keep these Pacific Islanders, who were subjects of Her Majesty in Queensland, or how they were to treat them as slaves after once they had landed here? The amendment meant nothing more than treating these people as slaves, and he hoped the Committee would not agree to any such proposition as that made by the hon. gentleman. The original Act seemed to be entirely forgotten by the hon. gentleman, as it was passed for the purpose of protecting the Pacific Islander and not making a slave of him. The tendency of the amendment, so far as he could see, was not to protect the labourer, but to make a downright slave of him; and he hoped the good sense of the Committee would prevent slavery being imported into what he believed to be a useful Bill.

Mr. THORN regretted that Indian labourers could not be included in the Bill. When the Bill was first brought forward he was under the impression that it would prevent all classes of black labour from coming beyond certain limits. He would take an early opportunity to bring on another Bill dealing with the matter.

Mr. KING said that although the Polynesian Labourers Bill was brought in for the purpose of protecting islanders, yet the white people of the colony had a perfect right to see that whilst protecting islanders they did not injure their own interests. It had been acknowledged that it was not desirable that the islanders, where introduced, should be allowed to go to the interior or supplant white labour; but it was no more desirable that after being in the colony three years they should be allowed to do so. The principle was just the same, and the injury was precisely similar, whether the labourer had been in the colony three years or three months. As regarded the natives being British subjects, he would remind the Committee that they had been doing what it was said they ought not to do, viz., keeping Chinese who were British subjects out of Queensland. No doubt they had a perfect right to exercise their power for the protection of the interests of the Queensland people; but they did not wish to oppress these islanders, who

could not be brought to the colony without their own consent, and were free to go away at the completion of their agreements. If they chose to stop in the colony, supposing the Bill to pass with the amendment, they would have to stop on sugar plantations. He hoped the Government would accept the amendment of the hon. member for North Brisbane, which would place certain restrictions on islanders so that they might not affect the white population injuriously.

Mr. THOMPSON did not see how the amendment would work. The poll-tax on Chinese was a failure. The only thing they could do was to treat them as vagrants.

Mr. WALSH said the Bill ought to be entitled, "A Bill to regulate the Kidnapping of Asiatics or South Sea Islanders." The Government should be careful what steps they took in this direction. They had already discouraged capitalists from coming to the colony. He knew of persons who were afraid to embark in the sugar industry lest Parliament should alter the regulations and prohibit the class of labour they had been accustomed to. He had very strong opinions on the subject, and maintained that there was plenty of room in the colony for all men who chose to come. What they needed most was population, which was not coming of its own accord, because there was nothing to come for. There were greater attractions in the colonies of Victoria and New South Wales, where there was employment, where the land was better, and where the climate was in every way suitable to settlement. This was a colony the half of which, especially along the coast, was suited only to Asiatics; and yet by their action they prohibited those Asiatics from coming. The hon. gentleman who last spoke referred to the poll-tax on the Chinese. He could assure the hon. gentleman that the action taken in regard to the Chinese had inflicted a loss to the revenue of £40,000 a-year. And whom had they benefited? If they had benefited the colony they would have been perfectly justified. Had the European population in the Cook district increased? Not at all. They had greatly diminished, and several of those who remained had lost considerably through the poll-tax. This was because the proper steps were not taken when they might have been taken with advantage in the early days of the goldfields. When these people came to the colony there should be certain restrictions placed on them: they should not be allowed to compete in every walk of life with the white labourer. Why should not the business Chinamen be taxed in municipal towns so as to place them on a footing with Europeans? And why not keep them off new goldfields? Was it wise, just, or beneficial to the colony to keep them off places where there was only a miserable pittance of 10s. a week to be earned, and thus reduce the revenue by £30,000 or £40,000 a year? The Minister for Works, he thought, said last year that they ought to govern the colony on commercial principles, but that would be impossible. If a customer, whether black or yellow, went into a business establishment, the owner would not on that account refuse to supply him with goods. If he did he would soon become insolvent; and so would the colony unless it opened its eyes to its necessities. They could not afford to import Europeans at £16 or £20 a-head, who took the first opportunity of leaving the colony and going to New South Wales or Victoria. No matter who came to our shores, if their passages were paid, the colony could not afford to prohibit them. Already the burden of the colony's debt was so heavy that nothing but the introduction of capital—which would not come if restrictions were placed upon labour—could save it. He was as anti-Chinese as any member of the Committee, but he was not one who would punish himself and the colony by excluding them. He had lived many years in Northern Queensland, and knew something about its climate and country, and he could tell the Committee that it would never prosper without an unlimited and unrestricted supply of Asiatic labourers. The lands along the northern coast were some of the richest in the colony, and admirably suited for sugar, rice, coffee, and other tropical produce, but that could only be done by unrestricted Asiatic labour. The colony would soon be compelled to retrace its steps, under the enormous pressure of its debt, until everybody was allowed to come to its shores without restriction. A short time ago the *Brisbane Courier* said that if the transcontinental railway was made it must be made by white labour. The *Courier* did not know what it was talking about. There were parts, especially in the Gulf district, where they would die off like rotten sheep. It did not matter so much whether Chinamen were made sleepers of or not, but they certainly ought to care about their own countrymen. If they wished men of capital to undertake that great work they must allow them to have any labour they chose. The more Asiatics they had the more Europeans would be required to look after them—the one was as necessary as the other. He trusted the Committee would act cautiously, because Queensland had not the confidence of capitalists. The sugar industry was most likely to tempt capitalists, as it was well known that squatting pursuits did not pay so well in this colony as in the others, and people coming from Victoria and the other colonies had lost money.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: They are still very anxious to come.

Mr. WALSH said his only object was to warn the Committee to be careful, and to legislate in accordance with the necessities of the colony.

Mr. KING said that what the hon. member (Mr. Walsh) had said was a strong argument in favour of the amendment of the hon. member for North Brisbane. The sugar industry was a most important one, and there was no doubt that capital had been kept out of the colony in consequence of the uncertainty of the employment of Polynesian labourers. If it was not for the "boys" who hung about the towns there would never have been any agitation on the Polynesian question. His constituents at Maryborough were very glad to see Polynesians on the sugar plantations, but they objected to seeing them in the towns; and so long as they were allowed to compete with the white population in towns, so long would there be an agitation against Polynesians generally. It would be a most unwise thing to lose the present opportunity, and suffer another general election to come, with the Polynesian question unsettled, and the people in the large towns prepared to vote against their admission owing to the stress they felt from their competition. No doubt many white people left the colony for Victoria and New South Wales because they were unable to find work here. He had no doubt that within the large towns on the Queensland coast there were at least a thousand Polynesians employed in doing white men's work, in labour unconnected with the cultivation of the land. If those men were sent back to the plantations, as they ought to be, there would be room for a thousand white men with their families in their places, and the sugar-planters would be all the better off. If the question were settled the white people would be satisfied, and no question would be made as to the employment of Polynesians on plantations.

Mr. AMHURST said he entirely endorsed what the hon. member (Mr. King) had said. From his own personal knowledge he knew that any amount of foreign capital would be introduced into the sugar industry if there was a certainty of getting a fair proportion of island labour. If that question was once settled, Queensland could, owing to its peculiar combination of advantages, compete with all the other sugar-growing countries in the world. Until it was settled the industry—and the colony as a whole—would never prosper as it ought. A better class of immigrants would then come out, in the shape of farmers with a small capital who would till their land with the aid of a few kanakas, and work with the capitalists on the central-mill system. The returns would be certain, and the result would be that the whole colony would be indirectly benefited.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that whilst agreeing with much that had fallen from hon. members in respect to the employment of kanaka labour, he must point out that the sugar industry of the colony had been most unduly fostered. It had been protected from the first by being freed from excise duty, and now it was to be further fostered by the introduction of kanaka labour. He was not going to object to sugar-planters having that labour. But what he wanted to point out was the illogical position which hon. members took up when dealing with the question of the employment of that labour. The reason given for the employment of kanakas by sugar-planters was that by it sugar could be produced much cheaper than it could if white labour was used. The same arguments would apply to the squatters and pastoral tenants of the Crown. He was not going to advocate the employment of kanakas by squatters—the day was gone by for that; and so he believed the day of their employment by sugar-planters would go by. It certainly was amusing to see what an animus was shown towards that class of people who were at present the mainstay of the colony—the idea now was to do all they possibly could to hamper the squatters and to pet and pamper the sugar industry. They had been told by hon. members that they had the richest sugar lands in the world—that they could supply a large portion of the world with the sugar which could be produced from their rich coast lands; and, further, that the industry was to be assisted by the employment of a particular class of labour—the result of which would be that even the hon. member for Enoggera would be deprived of the services of his kanaka. It certainly amused him, and the hon. member for Maryborough must have been amused himself when he began to talk about the inhabitants of the city objecting to kanakas being employed and shutting out white labour. There were very few members of the House who did not employ kanakas at the present time. He did not say that they were employed for the purpose of shutting out white labour; he believed they were used as a supplement to white labour. The hon. and selfish member who represented Mackay seemed to think of nothing beyond Foulden—that sugar plantation of his which was so appropriately named. That hon. member seemed to think that the whole management of the immigration affairs of the colony should centre in and about the sugar producing districts. He did not believe that the hon. member cared one straw whether any more white men were introduced into the colony; but at one time, so long as sugar had to be consumed in the colony, he cared very much about every extra immigrant who landed, because there was the chance of so much more consumption of sugar. Now that sugar had become an export, all the hon. member cared about was its production by blackfellows. He believed that the hon. member could give them some valuable information on the subject of blackbirding, in which, probably, he had been extensively engaged during his career. If kanakas were to be introduced he really hoped that some steps would be taken to prevent their going into the importing business. The Bill, or a similar one to it, must become law, but he thought he had shown how illogical it was when it would allow sugar-planters cheap labour which other people would be debarred from employing. He would distinctly state that he did not advocate the employment of kanakas in the outside districts. At the same time, he thought it only just and right that it should be pointed out that those men who were so much condemned—the pastoral tenants—were being most unfairly treated in being deprived of the right to employ kanaka labour. Let hon. members look at the hon. member for Mackay, who was a typical sugar-planter, and then look at the hon. member for Clermont, who was a typical squatter, and see which was the most fattening occupation of the two. Were they going to further assist the hon. member for Mackay to get his full—to fatten still further on the State? Were they going to make him even richer than he was now? It was the tendency of this measure to make the sugar-planters rich at the expense of the State. However, there were some parts of the Bill which were a decided improvement on the measure at present on the statute-book: one improvement was that the employers of kanaka labour would be compelled to subscribe funds so that medical assistance should be given to the sick on their estates. He would do the hon. member for Mackay the justice of saying that no injustice or improprieties existed in connection with the management of kanakas on his property or in his district, but he was perfectly certain that on many properties thoughout the colony the kanakas had been most disgracefully treated. He was therefore glad to see a measure proposed which would provide for a proper system of inspection to be paid for by taxing the employers themselves. That was a step in the right direction. Any amendment that would be proposed which would injuriously affect the hon. member for Mackay should receive his hearty support.

Mr. THORN said he was glad to hear the speech of the hon. member for Cook, with the greater part of which he agreed. The hon. member talked about men leaving the colony, and one reason he assigned for that was the fact that kanakas were being introduced. He hoped that it was not that which had scared the hon. member to leave them. Probably the financial difficulties looming in the distance had something to do with actions assigned to the hon. member. After listening to the hon. member's speech he came to the conclusion that that was the case. The hon. member ought now to set to work to rectify matters; he had the ability to set the colony right, and before the debate closed he hoped the hon. member would tell them how it was to be done. He hoped the hon. member for Cook would show them how the colony was to be lifted out of the financial scare, which no doubt would increase before long, and he hoped the hon. member would tell them how they were once again to be put in a flourishing condition.

Mr. WALSH said he had no intention of being drawn into making such a speech as the hon. member for Northern Downs desired. He presumed that he was at perfect liberty to go to a neighbouring colony or anywhere else he pleased. He could assure the hon. member that he had a considerably larger interest in Queensland than elsewhere.

Mr. PRICE was understood to support the Bill,

Mr. GRIFFITH said he could not see that what he proposed any more savoured of slavery than legislating for Polynesians in Queensland during the first three years of their service. It was no use to say that they were illogical: they could not deal with these matters strictly on a logical principle. They had to deal with things as they found them, and must do the best they could under the circumstances. He could not expect the Colonial Secretary to support any amendment of this kind, because the hon. gentleman did not believe in the Bill at all—at least, so he set forth in his speech on the second reading. Although this was not the only part of the Bill in which the question now at issue would be raised, it was the first place where it arose; and the question was, were they going to regulate the employment of Polynesians altogether, or regulate them only for a year or two after their arrival? He had heard no argument to show why they should not regulate them all the time they were here. If the Polynesians did not like to stay here, or the employment in which they could be properly engaged, let them go home. There was no more objection to this proposition than to dealing with the Chinese. The Government had dealt with them, and in other countries the question was dealt with in the same way—indeed, the Bill itself recognised the principle. He hoped the amendment would be carried, and he could not but regret that the Bill came on unexpectedly this evening in a very thin House, for to his knowledge there were many members absent who would have liked to have taken part in the debate.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he would give a most unqualified contradiction to the statement of the hon. member who had just sat down, that he (Mr. Palmer) did not believe in the Bill. The hon. member had no right to make such an assertion, for he had taken a great deal of trouble to put the Bill into shape, and believed thoroughly in any part of the Bill which provided for the proper treatment of Polynesians. There was a part of the Bill which he did not believe in, and never did. He wished the hon. gentleman would quote just what he said, and nothing else, if he must quote him at all. There was only one part of the Bill he (Mr. Palmer) did not believe in—he did not believe in the part which made a distinction between the sugar-grower, squatter, trader, merchant, farmer, or anyone else. He believed that part was thoroughly illogical, thoroughly unstatesmanlike, and unfair in every possible way. He had always said so, and had seen no reason to alter his convictions;—if one class could import this kind of labour, he could not see why others should not have the same privilege. They opposed the Bill simply as a matter of policy, and he said again that the hon. gentleman had no right to say that he (Mr. Palmer) did not believe in the Bill. There was only one part of the Bill with which, as was well known, he did not agree—namely, that part which limited the labour to one particular industry. It would generally be understood in other parts of the colony, if not here, that hon. members were sacrificing principles to pure expediency.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he was sorry that the hon. gentleman should think he had misrepresented him. He was talking only of that part of the Bill in regard to which there was a difference of opinion; the parts upon which they were agreed could go through without discussion. He was referring to the part of the Bill about which a considerable amount of political feeling existed in the colony. The hon. gentleman said that the only reasons hon. members had for supporting this part of the Bill were policy and expediency. He (Mr. Griffith) knew of no better reasons than policy and the consideration of what was expedient in the interests of the colony, and he confessed that those were the reasons which actuated him.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he held that other reasons could be induced for limiting the number of kanakas. In the first place, he might mention that it was well known that Europeans would not do the work for which kanakas were required on the coast sugar-lands. On the other hand, he held that where there was white labour able and willing to do the work at a fair and reasonable rate, the Government had no right to introduce an inferior race working for lower wages to compete with that labour. Those were the differences between free-trade and limitation as proposed in this Bill. He admitted that at one time there existed a necessity for cheap labour in the outside districts, in order to enable men to hold their own at all, and to prevent the country they held from being abandoned. That state of things had now ceased, however, and with it the necessity for employing black labour. Those were his views. He knew they were not popular with some, but he had arrived at them after due consideration, and he believed them to be sound and correct according to the principles of political economy. Some industries which were very beneficial to the State could not be carried on without black labour. Free-trade in kanakas was not, however, an altogether logical consequence of that fact; there might be reasons why the use of that kind of labour should be granted to one class of colonists more than to another.

Mr. GARRICK said that whilst introducing immigrants of the labouring class into the colony it would be extremely inconsistent to import black labour to compete with them. It was, as the Colonial Secretary said, a question of expediency. The labour should be confined as far as possible to the industry which required it. The sugar industry, if any, required it, because it was an exporting industry. The sugar-growers having overtaken the local consumption were now competing in foreign markets with growers in the West Indies and Mauritius who employed this kind of labour. Inducements had been held out to capitalists to invest large sums of money in that industry, especially in the northern parts of the colony, and the industry had been allowed to consolidate itself to a very considerable extent. The question now was, should that industry be maintained or not; and it seemed fair that a certain supply of that kind of labour should be allowed. In the case of the squatting industry such an argument could not be advanced, as those engaged in that industry, though also competing in foreign markets, did so with growers who used white labour. For those reasons it appeared to him to be inexpedient and impolitic to cut down the supply of black labour.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he was inclined to agree with the Colonial Secretary with regard to the motives of policy and expediency actuating certain hon. members; but the motives were not those of the policy and expediency of obtaining good government and sound legislation, but of getting and keeping a seat in this House. The ideas of the hon. member for Mitchell on the subject had probably been purified by fire when he was burnt in effigy. He (Mr. Hill) had not been burnt, and therefore his ideas were not purified. He believed that the kanakas, even if admitted to the inland districts, would not come into competition with white labour in the way supposed in this House. The hon. member for Maryborough spoke about 1,000 kanakas employed about towns, and suggested that if they were wiped out there would be room for 1,000 white men with their families; but the hon. member was rather begging the question, because a man who could afford to employ a kanaka at 10s. per

week might not be able to pay a white man 25s. a-week with rations. This cry had been started, at least as far as the squatters were concerned, by a few short-sighted publicans and storekeepers who had aroused an opposition on the part of working men who had never had an opportunity of looking at the other side of the question. He believed that every two or three kanakas who came into the colony found occupation for one additional white man. The hon. member for Moreton, in stating that the growers of wool had to compete only with those who employed white labour, was only another instance of the ignorance displayed by the hon. member whenever he spoke in the House about squatters. There could be no doubt about the wisdom of the policy involved in the Bill. They were educating their children in such a way as to induce them to hold aloof from all menial and manual labour, and yet there were persons who endeavoured to throw every obstacle in the way of introducing cheap labour in any shape or form.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he must put the hon. member for Gregory right upon one point. He had held in years past the views he now expressed upon the kanaka question; and as to his purification by fire, he ventured to say that the purification by the same element in the hon. member's case would, when his time came, be a far more severe operation than it had proved in his own case.

Mr. NORTON said he could see no reason why, when the islanders had served three years, they should not be allowed to remain in the colony. If they returned to the islands at the end of three years there was nothing to prevent them from coming back. Why, then, should the employer be put to the expense of sending them home and bringing them back? He objected most decidedly, however, to the kanaka interfering with white labour in towns. It was particularly objectionable that the islanders should hold positions as coachmen or as employés in stores—in which capacity they were largely engaged in some towns. The islanders were brought here as a matter of expediency. It was considered desirable to allow them to come here because they could undertake certain labour upon plantations better and more profitably than white men. They were in the first instance introduced for a particular object by a gentleman well known in the colony, and the Act which was first passed was in reality to regulate the introduction and employment of the labour. The employment of the kanakas upon plantations had always been, and he believed still was, generally assented to. True, a large section of people objected to the introduction of the labour in any shape or form, but the bulk of the people assented to it. He believed, however, that the employment of the labour should be limited to tropical agriculture. There was no occasion for it to be taken inland and employed upon stations, where the kanakas were quite out of place. It should be borne in mind that where the kanakas were employed in large numbers they became the means of finding employment in various directions for white labour. If they could do without the islanders altogether he would at once vote against their introduction; but to shut out this labour at the present time would be to aim a blow at the sugar industry which would have an injurious effect upon the entire colony.

Mr. GRIFFITH said the hon. member for Port Curtis appeared to misunderstand his amendment. He proposed to leave out the limitation in the clause, and to deal with the islanders while they remained in the colony, whether during a first or during a second period of three years. There could be no objection to the islanders remaining in the colony if they desired to do so.

Mr. DOUGLAS said he would vote for the amendment; but he thought there were good reasons why the islanders should be encouraged to return to their home after their three years' labour. He presumed that the kanakas had rather a misty conception of their agreement; but it was generally supposed by their friends, he believed, that they would return at the end of three years. The return of the islanders, moreover, doubtless induced some of their friends to visit the colony. Of course, if those who had already been to the colony chose to enter into fresh indentures, well and good. There could be no objection to that.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN was sorry to say that although he had paid great attention to the debate he was not satisfied with either side. He was under the impression that the leader of the Opposition intended to bring forward an amendment to the effect that the sugar-growers should get notice that kanakas would not be introduced into the colony after three years.

Mr. GRIFFITH: No.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said at anyrate that would be an amendment that he thought would get support in that House. He (Mr. O'Sullivan) differed entirely from the hon. member (Mr. Norton) that it was with the general assent of people of the colony that kanakas were introduced. He denied that there was any general assent of the kind, and he thought he knew the feelings of the people of the colony quite as well as the hon. member. He also denied the statement of the hon. member (Mr. Morehead) that it was a well-known fact that white labour could not compete with black labour. It might be a fact, but it certainly was not a well-known fact: it was not admitted at all; he never knew a white man who admitted it. He (Mr. O'Sullivan) had always maintained that it was a libel on a white man to say that he could not do what a black man could do. White labour grew sugar on the Clarence without the assistance of kanakas, and why could not the same be done here? Would it be denied that the sugar-growers of the colony had not already had special privileges extended to them with regard to the value of their land, which they got for almost nothing: and was there not a duty imposed which assisted them? The hon. member for Moreton (Mr. Garrick) said they were entitled to this class of labour because they were exporters; but were not squatters also exporters? He was under the impression that squatters were exporters of wool, hides, and tallow.

Mr. GARRICK said his argument was that the producers squatters had to compete with did not use black labour, but the producers of sugar had to compete with those who did use black labour.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: What about South Africa, a large wool-producing country; and America, too?

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he wanted to know what was to become of these kanakas when their agreements expired at the end of three years? Were they to be at liberty to go all over the country wherever they liked?

Mr. GRIFFITH: No.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said, then they ought—when they put foot on these shores they ought to be free men. Of course, they came here under agreement, and when they had served their time were they to be slaves or free men?

Mr. DOUGLAS: We are bound to send them back.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN asked what right had they to send them back if they did not want to go? How could a kanaka be a free man unless he had a right to go where he liked after he had per-

formed his agreement—and what right had they to touch him to send him back? He was very much amused with the logic of the hon. member for Maryborough, who was very cautious and prudent with these people. The hon. member said, now would be a nice time to settle the question—before another election came on. No doubt he thought if he could get these people nicely settled on the plantations the question would be settled. The hon. member said that by clearing the towns of kanakas they would make room for a thousand families; and he (Mr. O'Sullivan) said that by clearing the country they would make room for five thousand. He objected to any special class legislation for sugar-growers. If kanakas were introduced into the colony he (Mr. O'Sullivan) claimed his right to hire one the same as any sugar-planter. No doubt sugar-growers were a useful class, but after all sugar-growing was a commercial speculation, and they had no right to special legislation to help them on. If any member would bring forward an amendment doing away with this kind of labour in the colony at the end of three years he (Mr. O'Sullivan) would be happy to support it.

Mr. KING said nearly every member who had spoken on the other side of the question to-night had spoken of the proposition to limit this labour as being illogical; but that was very absurd, because they could not do anything if they acted purely upon principles of logic. If they did they would make it a *reductio ad absurdum*, which was nothing more than carrying a logical process to an illogical end. They had to adapt their logic to circumstances. They had to deal with circumstances as they found them. They did not find that this world was arranged on logical principles. The principle might be very good to a certaint extent, but when they found logic opposed by facts, they had to consider the facts and let logic give way. The hon. member who had just spoken had said it would be reducing these men to slavery if, after their three years' engagement had expired, they were not allowed to go where they pleased in the colony and employ themselves as they liked; so that it would appear that the legislature which provided for the introduction and protection of these people should not protect the white population at all. The authority of the legislature was to be extended to the protection of Polynesians, and not to the protection of the men from whom the legislature derived authority. The member for Stanley had employed servants, and had discharged them when he was done with them. What would he think if a servant came back and said, "I like your house, I don't wish to leave it and I will live in one of your rooms?" Would he think that by refusing to permit that the servant was being treated as a slave? This country belonged to us, and we had a right to say on what conditions strangers should be admitted, and it was for strangers to say whether they would accept them. These islanders could either accept the conditions which the legislature chose to impose or they could go away, the payment of their passages being provided for.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said the hon. member's illustration was far-fetched. He had never said that the islanders would be slaves, but argued that they would not be quite free. There was no analogy between the discharged servant who came back and took possession of one of his rooms and the case of Polynesians who had served their time, and he could not help thinking that the hon. member had not been studying his logic lately. These Polynesians served their three years, and were at liberty to come or stay. If they were at liberty to stay, were they free to go all over the colony?

Mr. WALSH said the hon. member who had just sat down had made one statement which he felt bound to correct. The hon. member had said that Europeans could be employed on sugar plantations the same as kanakas. He could, however, state that if sugar-planters were compelled to employ white labour they would be forced to abandon sugar-growing. And seeing that one-third of the capital of the country was employed in the growth of sugar, he would ask was it desirable that planters should be prevented from getting the labour necessary to work their plantations properly, and be compelled to abandon the occupation? Such a step would deal a blow to the colony which could not be remedied. It must be remembered that sugar-planters here had to compete with Java and Mauritius, where labour was much cheaper than kanaka labour. He was surprised at the hon. member for Stanley, who had so much common-sense generally, speaking so foolishly on this subject. The sugar industry could not possibly prosper without cheap labour.

The PREMIER said the whole of the Bill was intended to deal with the Pacific labourer during the time he was under his three years' term of service with a sugar-grower in the colony, and all the provisions in the Bill were made with that intention. However, the hon. member for Maryborough (Mr. King) evidently wished that the Bill should have a wider scope, according to the amendments of which he had given notice. The Bill simply dealt with the kanaka as being under a certain term of engagement, and provided that he should be paid his wages, and that he should be returned to his native island on the expiration of such engagement; but the hon. gentleman in his amendment intended to go further, and to provide what should be done with the kanaka after his term of service was up. He the Premier had quite understood from the speech of the hon. gentleman what the object of moving his amendment was—namely, whether after having served their term of engagement these Pacific islanders should be under the supervision of the Government, and be prevented from coming into competition with white labour. That was a fair subject for discussion, although it was outside the scope of the Bill before the Committee, and he should like to hear a discussion upon it at some other time. The hon. gentleman had, however, been forestalled that evening in a very cunning way by the hon. leader of the Opposition, who had taken the wind out of the hon. gentleman's sails completely, and had tried to effect the same object, apparently, by moving an amendment in the interpretation clause to the effect that by "labourer" was meant a Pacific islander who had been brought to Queensland. If such an amendment as that was carried it would be carrying more than was intended by the hon. member for Maryborough (Mr. King), and would make perfect nonsense of the Bill. Supposing a labourer had served three years—the term of his engagement—and came into a town for the purpose, possibly, of taking a passage in the first ship returning to his native island and went to a house for a night's lodging, how would clause 40 apply to him?—

"Any person who harbours a labourer without reporting the fact to the nearest inspector and to the Immigration Agent shall be liable on conviction thereof to a penalty not exceeding £20."

Or if he went into a public-house to get a drink what would be the result? According to clause 42—

"Any person who sells, supplies, or gives to a labourer or islander any fermented or spirituous liquor, or any liquor part whereof is fermented or spirituous, shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding five pounds."

Those regulations might very well apply to men under terms of engagement, but they could not

be applied to men who had served their time. If they were to have a discussion on the point raised by the hon. member for Maryborough, whether, after his term of service had expired, a kanaka was to be still under the supervision of the Government, or to be allowed to compete with white men in other than semi-tropical labour, let hon. members do so and take a division upon it rather than accept an amendment like that of the hon. leader of the Opposition, which would make perfect nonsense of the Bill. Surely it was not the intention of the hon. member to spoil the Bill altogether? It had been brought in with the best intentions, and he did not wish to see it emasculated at the start.

Mr. GRIFFITH said it was not a question of emasculating, but of making the Bill stronger. The Premier had been pleased to state that he endeavoured to forestall the Speaker in a very cunning manner. He was much obliged for the compliment, but was sorry the hon. gentleman had to use such arguments. At the second reading of the Bill he had expressed his intention of proposing certain amendments, of which this was one, and at that time the Speaker had not intimated his intention of moving any. Of course, this amendment would not stand alone, because if carried it would have the effect of enlarging the scope of the Bill so as to deal with all Polynesians in the colony. This amendment would necessitate other amendments which he would be prepared to propose when the time came, many of which were similar to those of which the Speaker had given notice. There was one which would come in at once in the next clause, which should be amended to read—"No person shall hereafter introduce islanders into Queensland or employ them in the colony except under the provisions of this Act." The hon. gentleman had pointed out that it would be necessary to amend the Bill further if the amendment were carried. Of course, it would have to be widened throughout. As to the suggestion that the discussion ought to have taken place on some clause where it could be raised, there was no use putting in a definition that would not fit the rest of the Bill. It was necessary to raise the question the first time the Bill raised it, and that was the time it had been raised.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he could not concur with the Premier in saying that the hon. member was forestalled in introducing popular amendments, because the only popular amendment would be one which would keep the labourers out of the colony altogether. He had not yet been convinced that the business of sugar-growing could not be carried on by white labour; and he should like to know whether in introducing these islanders they were not paying too dear for the whistle. If an amendment were brought forward limiting their introduction he should support it.

Mr. AMHURST said he could bring figures to show that it was perfectly impossible to grow sugar in the north without kanaka labour.

Mr. McLEAN said the hon. member for Cook seemed to think that sugar-growing could not be successfully carried on without kanakas. But the most successful sugar-planters in the colony were those who never employed a kanaka in their lives. He could point to dozens of such men on the Logan. The small planters, who employed no kanakas, were the most successful sugar-growers. He believed the white man was just as able to work in the sugar fields in the south as any black man. It was said the kanakas were better able to stand the heat, but it was a peculiar fact that no sooner did they come into towns than they put an umbrella over their heads.

Mr. GRIMES said the remarks of the hon. member for Cook were simply the old arguments reiterated; and if he had read in *Hansard* the speeches made on the second reading of the Bill he would have seen the same arguments used and satisfactorily refuted. It was a fact that sugar was at present being successfully grown by white labour; and if it could be done in the southern part of the colony, where the advantages were not so great, why should it not be done in the north? As far as endurance was concerned there was no comparison between Britons and kanakas, whom he had often seen working side by side; and they could stand the sun even better than the aborigines. The whole of the hon. member's arguments were perfect nonsense.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said the hon. member was talking rubbish. Let him go up to Mackay and see how the kanakas were working there. It would be impossible for the Mackay planters to carry on their work with any prospect of success without they employed Polynesian labour.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said it was a good job that the hon. member had said so little, as the more he said the worse he would have got on. It appeared by the hon. member's statement that the whole colony was Mackay, where there were two or three big settlers.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It is a large sugar-growing district.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he should prefer to see a lot of small family plantations, such as had been described by the hon. member for Logan. Families managed to work the cotton plantations in West Moreton, and he did not see why they should not succeed in the growth of sugar. If Mackay were struck out of the map the colony would get on very well without it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the mind of the hon. member for Stanley seemed to be crippled notwithstanding his long residence in the colony. The hon. member had studied the growth of the cotton, and he seemed to think that sugar was to be operated on in the same way. He did not hesitate to tell the hon. member that those people who had taken to sugar planting on the Logan wished that they had never heard of it; they would be glad to get rid of their responsibilities now. The less said about what was being done on the Clarence and the Logan the better. He knew what was going on in the way of the transference of property in the Logan district. The Committee seemed to be agreed as to the necessity for the Bill, and the only impediment in the way was to determine how the islanders were to be disposed of after their term of service expired. The hon. member for Stanley—whose sincerity he did not wish to impugn—wanted to hunt black labour out of the colony. He unhesitatingly asserted, knowing what was going on in other parts of the world where cheap labour was employed in the production of sugar, that if kanaka labour was not employed in the colony the sugar-producing industry would be knocked on the head. It was idle, for the sake of popularity or anything else, to assert that they did not want black labour. It was not a question of standing the heat of the sun, but a question of being able to bear the sweltering, steaming process which men were subjected to on sugar plantations. For every three or four islanders who were employed on a plantation it was a matter of necessity that there should be one white man. The sugar-growers had had to put up with all sorts of disappointment up to the present, and if they were to compete with the producers of other countries they must be allowed to use black labour. The only difficulty with him was how to dispose of the islanders after their term of service had expired, and he held the idea that they ought

either to return to the islands or to their own class of labour, and not be turned loose upon the community. If anyone found himself in the position that he was in sometimes when he went to Toowoomba about once a fortnight, and saw the way in which he was tormented for employment by men who wanted to get into the Government service, or the Police, or to the Railway, they would think as he did. It gave him great pain and annoyance to say no, and that he did not carry billets in his pocket; but he felt the force of the statement that from a thousand to thirteen hundred men had been elbowed out of employment by the blackfellows being turned loose and allowed to go about like the rest of the community. Had hon. members ever asked who had been the greatest employers of islanders? He would not mention names, but he had made inquiries, and it was strange that those who were most anxious for popularity and the vote of the white man at election times, took care when they had the chance to give employment to blackfellows. He hoped that the hon. member for Stanley would be satisfied that black labour was necessary to the successful prosecution of the sugar-growing industry, and, after all, there was any amount of land on the coast that required cheap labour to develop its resources. They must remember that they had to compete with several other places in the world, where perhaps the soil and climate was just as adapted for it as Queensland. If they had to do with Queensland only the remarks might have some force.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved the Chairman out of the chair.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said that, like the Minister for Lands, he was perfectly satisfied. He was satisfied that the hon. gentleman knew nothing at all about the matter.

The CHAIRMAN reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

The House adjourned at eight minutes to 11 o'clock.